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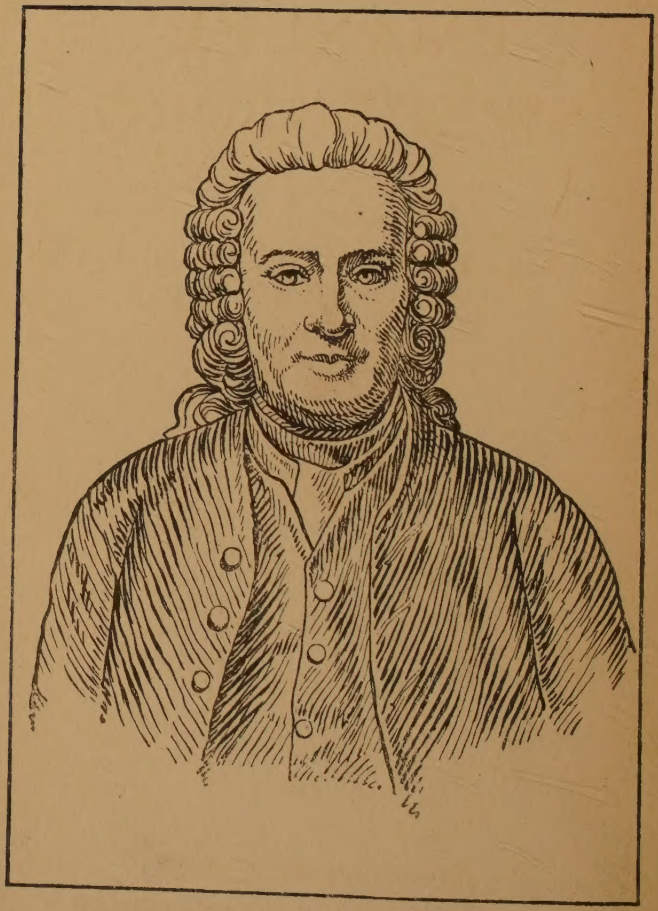

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

1688–1772

BY

L. B. DE BEAUMONT, D.Sc.

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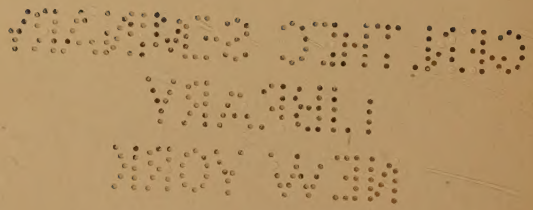

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EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

CHAPTER I.

SWEDENBORG'S LIFE.

Most educated people have heard something about Swedenborg, but one meets still with many who know little more than the name of that truly great man. It is vaguely identified in their minds with mysticism, with spiritualistic experiences, with dreams and visions, and much that is supposed to be included under the general term of "occultism." Yet, those who have taken some trouble to become acquainted with Swedenborg's numerous scientific, philosophical, and theological works are disposed to assert that he was not a mystic in the proper sense of the word; that he was actually opposed to the practice of table-turning, table-rapping, and other more or less doubtful forms of intercourse with spirits; that much which is commonly described as "occult" is not even mentioned in his books; and that the visions to which he has referred in his later writings are really psychological states entirely

different from what we read of in mediæval lives of saints. It is therefore proposed that we should consider here Swedenborg's life and work briefly, yet sufficiently to enable us to realise his rightful place in science, his philosophical opinions, and the relation of his theological teaching to modern religious thought.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born at Stockholm on the 29th of January 1688. He was the second son of Dr. Jesper Swedberg, at that time a preacher to the Court of King Charles XI. of Sweden, later a Dean and Professor of Theology at Upsala, and later still Bishop of Skara in West Gothland. His mother, Sarah Behm, was the daughter of Albrecht Behm, Assessor in the Royal College of Mines.

Great care was bestowed by Bishop Swedberg upon the education of his son Emanuel. Entering the University of Upsala in 1699, he remained there as a student until his twenty-first year, being specially assisted and encouraged by his brother-in-law Eric Berzelius, a distinguished scholar, while he devoted himself with much zeal to the study of mathematics and the physical sciences.

In 1709, he took his degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and soon after started on a tour of nearly five years, going first to England, where he remained about two years, principally at London and Oxford. He there made the acquaintance of Flamsteed and Halley, studied Newton daily, as he wrote to his brother-in-law, and began his career as an inventor, his fertile brain being engaged, together with the study of

higher mathematics and physics, upon such subjects as the production of a flying machine, a quick-firing gun, an air pump, and a submarine war vessel.

From England Swedenborg passed to the Continent, and resided for two more years in France, Holland, and Germany, returning at last to Sweden in 1715, through Stralsund, just as King Charles XII. was about to be besieged in that city.

In 1718 Swedenborg was invited by the celebrated Swedish engineer Polhem to come with him to Lund where Charles XII., who had just escaped from Stralsund, was then staying. The King seems to have taken much interest in Swedenborg, whom he appointed Assessor Extraordinary in the Royal College of Mines, directing him at the same time to assist Polhem in his mechanical works.

Thus it is that our young engineer came to execute a commission of great difficulty and importance during the siege of Frederickshall. He transported over mountains and valleys, on rolling machines of his own invention, two galleys, five large boats, and a sloop from Stromstadt to Iderfjold, a distance of nearly seventeen miles. Under cover of these vessels, the King brought his heavy artillery, which could not possibly have been conveyed by road, under the very walls of Frederickshall.

In the same year, Swedenborg brought out a work on algebra, the first treatise on that branch of mathematics published in the Swedish language. Indeed, algebra was so little known in the country that

Swedenborg feared he would find no one capable of correcting the printer's proofs. He also published a book entitled *Attempts to find the Longitude of Places by Lunar Observations.*

In 1719 the Swedberg family was ennobled by Queen Ulrica Eleonora, who, with the rank of nobility, granted to its members the name of Swedenborg, Emanuel, as the eldest member of the family, being thus called to a seat in the House of Nobles. In the course of the same year, Swedenborg published several works, in which were treated such widely different subjects as "A Proposal for a Decimal System of Money and Measures," "A Treatise on the Motion and Position of the Earth and Planets," and "On Docks, Sluices, and Salt-works."

In 1721 we find Emanuel Swedenborg starting on another journey. This time he visited Amsterdam, Aix-la-Chapelle, Liège, and Cologne, paying special attention to the processes employed in the mines and smelting-works of those industrial centres. In 1722 he was at Leipzig, where he published the first parts of his *Miscellaneous Observations connected with the Physical Sciences*, the fourth part being published at Hamburg in the same year. After fifteen months laboriously spent abroad, Swedenborg returned to Stockholm and entered formally upon his duties as Assessor of the College of Mines.

The next eleven years were filled with his official occupations at the College and the active interest he took in the deliberations and discussions of the House of Nobles. We find him there introducing important

measures for the much-needed improvement of the trade and finances of Sweden.

In 1724 Swedenborg declined an invitation from the University of Upsala to the Chair of Pure Mathematics rendered vacant by the death of Nils Celsius, but a few years later he was admitted a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Upsala.

In 1733 he goes once more abroad, this time accompanied by Count Gyllenborg and some other friends. This journey was rendered memorable by the fact that during his stay in Dresden Swedenborg began the printing of his great work, the *Principia*, his *Opera Philosophica et Mineralia* being published in the following year at Dresden and Leipzig, the cost of that large undertaking (three vols. in folio) being defrayed by the Duke of Brunswick.

Of the vast work of the *Principia* it is difficult to speak so as to convey briefly an adequate idea of its contents.

After an introductory chapter on "The Means Conducive to a True Philosophy," Swedenborg, in the first part of his *Principia*, deals with what he calls the First Simple, that is the First Natural point, and its Existence from the Infinite. The finite cannot exist *per se*, he argues; therefore it must be derived from the Infinite, which alone possesses *per se* uncreated, uncaused existence. The simple is the first entity existing by motion from the Infinite, and thus, in regard to existence, it is a medium between the Infinite and the finite. This first natural point is immediately produced from the

Infinite as "a Conatus of motion in the Infinite." In this effort towards motion he sees all that quality which brings finite things into act with all their modes and contingencies, and leads ultimately to the production of the world itself. Pure "motion" is therefore Swedenborg's conception of the origin and constitution of the created universe, a conception which must have appeared to the men of the eighteenth century far more venturesome and doubtful than it appears to us to-day in the light of modern scientific investigations. Thus in his French *Essais de Philosophie Critique*, the distinguished thinker Vacherot did not hesitate to say: "When we assert, after Leibnitz, that matter is force, we merely mean this, that the reality which we perceive by the help of our senses is essentially motion and activity, so that the idea of force is all that remains in any notion of a material substance, when sensation and images have been removed from that notion." It seems clear that M. Vacherot could have named Swedenborg as well as Leibnitz in support of his views.

In the second part of the *Principia*, our philospoher treats of the causes and mechanism of the magnetic forces; of the influence of the magnet upon iron; and of various other matters connected with that fascinating subject.

In the third part are treated some of the vast questions affecting the origin and existence of the starry heaven and the formation of planets and satellites in our solar system, with an originality which is now generally acknowledged by scientific

authorities. Swedenborg's view, that the planets of our solar system derive their origin from the solar matter, came to be adopted also by the philosopher Kant, and by the great French astronomer Laplace. Of the priority of Swedenborg's opinion on this point there can be no question. As Dr. Magnus Nyren has said: "It cannot be disputed that the real germ of the nebular hypothesis—namely, the idea that the entire solar system has formed itself out of a single chaotic mass which rolled itself at first into a colossal sphere, and afterwards threw off a ring which through continuous rotation at length broke into parts, these finally contracting into balls, planets —first found utterance in Swedenborg. Kant's work on the same subject appeared twenty-one years later, and Laplace published his hypothesis sixty-two years later." *

On the other hand, Swedenborg's views that the earth and the other planets have gradually removed themselves from the sun, thus receiving a gradually lengthened time of revolution, and that the earth's time of rotation has also greatly increased in the course of ages, should be compared with the views put forward by G. H. Darwin. In Swedenborg's *Principia* we find, as Dr. Frank Sewall has said, "a complete theory of evolution embracing motions and forms, the nature and functions of the successive auras, the laws of vibratory currents and the magnetic

* See *Swedenborg and the Nebular Hypothesis*, by Magnus Nyren, Ph.D., Astronomer at the Observatory of Pultawa, Russia.

force. . . . This vast work of the *Principia* marks the advance of Swedenborg's mind from the scientific to the philosophic plane." Swedenborg himself calls his work "philosophical," meaning by philosophy "the knowledge of the mechanism of our world, or of whatever in the world is subject to the laws of geometry, or which it is possible to unfold to view by experience assisted by geometry or reason." Yet, meanwhile, Swedenborg's mind was being gradually led on by its own working, as is the case with truly original thinkers, to the consideration of still higher and wider subjects. In 1734 he published, again in Leipzig and Dresden, a work in Latin entitled *Outlines on the Infinite and the Final Cause of Creation* ("Prodromus de Infinito et Causa finali Creationis"), a work which tended to connect his cosmology with the physiological ideas towards which his mind was moving. At that period we find Swedenborg enjoying, on account of his scientific publications, a considerable reputation not only in Sweden but all over the Continent of Europe, and in 1734 the Imperial Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg appointed him one of its corresponding members.

In 1736 he again went abroad, and visited Denmark, Holland, France, and Italy, a whole year being spent at Venice and Rome. He was away from home for several years, but they were not years of recreation or idle sight-seeing.

In the journal he kept, and which has fortunately been preserved, we find a wealth of observations on all sorts of subjects. In France, he clearly discerns

the political and social conditions which were preparing the Revolution, while engaged in studying anatomy, which had taken then the foremost place in his scientific preoccupations. In Italy, he carries on the same studies while being also keenly interested in the works of art, the splendid monuments, and the religious ceremonials in churches at Rome and elsewhere. Everywhere he continues, as an engineer and mining expert, to observe closely the different mechanical devices in mines, salt-works, or blasting furnaces, or whatever was of special interest in the field of geology. In fact his curiosity *de omni re scibili* seems to have been simply inexhaustible and insatiable, backed as it was by wonderful physical strength and robust health, without which such sustained application could not have been long maintained.

The result of Swedenborg's anatomical and physiological studies was rendered manifest between 1740 and 1745 by the publication of his great works, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom* and *The Animal Kingdom*, which, however, he himself regarded only as an introduction to a still greater and more comprehensive work on the whole science of physiology.

He did not attempt the task, which, of course, at that period, and with the limited means of investigation in his hands, could not have been accomplished; but he was able to foresee the future trend of that great science, and to make some remarkable contributions to the knowledge of his time.

Not a few imperfections have been noticed in his anatomical descriptions and physiological views, but those imperfections, in most cases, should not be attributed to him, or at any rate to him alone, for he had made it a rule for himself to rely always on the consensus of the highest scientific authorities of his time, rather than upon his own researches or experiments. This prudent method of work was no doubt inspired by the great object he proposed to himself. A knowledge of the soul was the supreme object of his inquiry. Partly influenced by Cartesian ideas, he was prepared to admit that "under the empire of geometry, and under the mechanical laws of motion, lay the whole mineral as well as the vegetable kingdom, and indeed the animal kingdom also, with respect to mechanical organs, muscles, fibres, and membranes, or with respect to its anatomical, vegetative, and organic relations," but with respect to the soul and its various faculties, he adds, "I do not think it possible that they can be explained or comprehended by any laws of motion known to us. . . . We see every emotion and mode of the soul exhibited mechanically in the body. But, after all, what that intelligence is in the soul which knows, and is able to determine, to choose, to let one thing pass out into act and not another, of this we are obviously ignorant." (*Principia*, I.) In such ignorance, so simply and honestly confessed, Swedenborg, as we shall see, was not to remain, but he reached his knowledge of the true nature of the soul by a path the existence of which he

could not even have suspected at this period of his life.

Swedenborg's modesty as regards his own personal attainments in anatomy and physiology must not lead us to under-estimate his remarkable knowledge of those branches of natural science. Dr. Gustav Retzius, in his presidential address at Heidelberg in 1903 before the Congress of Anatomists, has not hesitated to speak as follows :

" Emanuel Swedenborg was not only a great expert in the knowledge of the brain according to the standard of his time, but in fundamental questions he was far in advance of his contemporaries . . . he was not only a learned anatomist and skilled observer but he was also a deep and critical anatomical thinker. . . . One can understand more easily his life and his work, when one combines his achievements in anatomy and physiology with those in geology, mechanics, cosmogony, and physics. With this as a background, his whole aim becomes more manifest. He sought in all to find the principle of the unity of the world and of life."

This undoubtedly Swedenborg meant when he professed his supreme object in the study of man's physical frame to be a knowledge of his soul, and when he wrote that " in man the world is concentrated, and in him, as in a microcosm, the whole universe may be contemplated from the beginning to the end."

The year 1745 brings us to a change in the mental attitude of Emanuel Swedenborg which is not easy

to describe, and which men who are most able to appreciate his scientific work before that date experience, perhaps, most difficulty in understanding. They acknowledge the change, but its cause and significance are often to them what the preaching of St. Paul was to the Jews and the Greeks.

The rigidly mechanical physicist, the speculative philosopher, the profound anatomist and physiologist now appears, by an outwardly inexplicable transition, as an illuminated Seer, and the exponent of a divine philosophy of Life. The world is always inclined to regard such psychological phenomena with suspicion, and to seek for an explanation of them on purely natural grounds. Voltaire tried to have it believed that the parallel case in the life of Blaise Pascal was simply due to a loss of mental equilibrium caused by an accident which Pascal met with on the bridge of Neuilly in 1654. But later researches have thrown much doubt on this circumstance, and in any case the fact remains that two years later, in 1656, Pascal was sane enough to write his famous *Lettres Provinciales*, and later still to deal with some difficult mathematical problems with remarkable intellectual power.

In the case of Swedenborg, it may equally be said that those who knew him best failed to notice in him any alteration of mental power or any change in his character. He still continued to take an active part in the proceedings of the House of Nobles in his own country, and Count Höpken, the Prime Minister of Sweden, states that in 1761 Swedenborg presented

to the Diet the best memorial on the subject of National Finance. This same Count Höpken had known Swedenborg intimately for many years *after* the change to which we are alluding, and had remained his warm personal and political friend.

While engaged on his vast theological works, Swedenborg also writes papers presented to the Diet of Sweden on such subjects as "Additional Considerations with respect to the Course of Exchange"; "A Memorial in favour of a Return to the Pure Metallic Currency"; "A Memorial to the King against the Exportation of Copper," and other such papers, exhibiting the same accuracy of thought which had characterised his writings before the year 1745.

Of course, it will be remembered that such a transition from scientific to religious interest has occurred in the lives of some of the greatest men. We have named Pascal; we may also name Leibnitz and Newton. But Swedenborg's position implies much more than a change of interests. He has solemnly declared and repeatedly affirmed that, while he was engaged in the studies which absorbed his whole attention and were the delight of his laborious life, he was divinely led to relinquish such studies and to give himself, under special illumination, to the study of the Word of God alone. Here are his own words: "I have been called to a holy office by the Lord, who most graciously manifested Himself in person to me, His servant, in the year 1745, and opened my sight into the spiritual world,

granting me the privilege of conversing with spirits and angels. . . . Likewise I testify in truth that from the first day of that calling, I have not received anything whatever relating to the doctrines of that Church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I was reading the Word." The reference to "that Church" is made clear by a passage immediately preceding, in which Swedenborg explains how he came to be made the instrument of so wonderful a grace.

"Since the Lord cannot manifest Himself in person,* and yet has foretold that He would come and establish a New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, it follows that this will be effected by means of a man who is able not only to receive the doctrines of that Church into his understanding but also to publish them by the press. . . . The things related by me are not miracles, but are proofs that, for certain ends, I have been introduced by the Lord into the spiritual world."

The object of this little book being simply to introduce to the reader a most remarkable and interesting personality, and to describe briefly his contribution to the philosophical and religious thought of our time, we shall leave the reader to form his

* In his *True Christian Religion*, pp. 776, 777, Swedenborg explains why this cannot be, in these words: "The reason why the Lord will not appear in person is, that since His Ascension into Heaven He is in the glorified Human, and in this He cannot appear to any man unless He first open the eyes of his spirit; and these cannot be opened with anyone who is in evils and thence in falsities."

own judgment on those claims of Swedenborg; if he is inclined to reject all belief in a future life, and all idea of a divine revelation in whatever form, he will, of course, refuse to accept doctrines which imply, in the strongest sense, a belief in a personal God who has revealed Himself to mankind, and in the immortal destinies of the human soul.

If, on the other hand, the reader already admits, in some definite way, the inspiration of the Seers and Prophets of the Bible; if he accepts St. Luke's statement about the disciples (Luke xxiv. 31), that "their eyes were opened and they knew Him," then his difficulty will not be about a principle, but it will simply resolve itself into a question of evidence.

On one point only must we be permitted to record our own conviction, without which, of course, this little work could not have been undertaken. We believe in the absolute honesty and sincerity of Swedenborg, in the accounts he gives of his spiritual experiences in his numerous works written after the year 1745. And our belief only reflects the belief of well-known men who knew him and had ample opportunities to form an opinion on this point. Thus Baron Grimm describes him as "a man not only distinguished by his honesty but by his knowledge and intelligence"; and he adds: "This fact is confirmed by authorities so respectable that it is impossible to deny it; but the question is how to believe it." *

* *Mem. Hist. Litt. et Anecdot.*, by Baron Grimm, iii. London edit., 1813.

We have already given the opinion which Count Höpken, who had known Swedenborg intimately, entertained concerning him. Many similar testimonies could be added, but they would, after all, leave the question where it stands, namely, was Swedenborg labouring for so many years (1745–1772) under an unconscious state of mental derangement, honestly but erroneously believing that he saw what he never saw, and that he heard what he never heard, and can the steady, orderly, sustained output of philosophical and theological works, full of profound thoughts on all sorts of subjects, during all those years, be reconciled with such an hypothesis? If his mind could be thus affected, how is it that the same mind remained capable of the same scientific accuracy as before when dealing with matters of a scientific nature, such as the papers which, for a time, he still continued to write for the Swedish Diet? It is, as we have already pointed out, the same problem as the one raised by Voltaire in the case of Pascal. If the religious ideas and the intense religious feelings of one who, like Pascal, had previously exhibited to the world a mind of transcendent power in scientific investigations must be considered as the result of the sudden or gradual deterioration of so great a mind, how are we to account for Pascal as the author of the *Provinciales*, more than two years after the supposed decline of his mighty genius? Many hypotheses may no doubt be proposed to account for this; we may invoke the curious facts which we laboriously endeavour to classify under such headings

as "Double Personality" and the "Subconscious," but we must at any rate be careful not to raise in so doing difficulties as great or perhaps greater than those presented by the claims of Emanuel Swedenborg. As regards Spiritism, with which he was well acquainted, we may as well state at once that he repudiated any connection with it, and was particularly anxious not to be understood as saying that he was a medium through whom spirits spoke and communicated information from the other world. He strongly deprecated such commerce with spirits as being very dangerous in itself, and he clearly believed that such intercourse was not conducive to the interests of truth. Thus he says, in his *Apocalypse Explained*, No. 1182:

"It is believed by many that they may be taught by the Lord by spirits speaking with them; but they do not know that this is fraught with danger to their souls. As soon as spirits begin to speak with man they come out of their spiritual state into the natural state of man; they join themselves with the thoughts of his affection, and from these they speak with him. It is owing to this that the spirit speaking is in the same principles as the man, be they truths or be they falsities; and also that he excites them, and by his affection conjoined to the man's affection strongly confirms them. And what is ridiculous, when a man believes the Holy Spirit speaks with him, or operates upon him, the spirit also believes himself to be the Holy Spirit; this is common with enthusiastic spirits. From these considerations it is evident to

what danger a man is exposed who speaks with spirits or manifestly feels their operation."

In his *Spiritual Diary*, Swedenborg has some very striking remarks on this subject, which the reader may find useful in forming a judgment as to the state of mind in which Swedenborg approached such questions. He says: "When spirits begin to speak with a man he ought to beware that he believes nothing whatever from them, for they say almost anything. Things are fabricated by them, and they lie. . . . Therefore when spirits are speaking, I have not been permitted to have faith in the things which they related. For they have a passion for inventing; and whenever any subject of conversation is presented, they think they know it and give their opinions upon it, one after another, one in one way and another in another, quite as if they knew, and if a man then listens and believes, they press on and deceive and seduce in divers ways . . . Let men beware therefore how they believe them." (No. 1622.) And further: "Spirits can be introduced who represent another person . . . Thus yesterday and to-day (August 19, 1748) one known to me in life was personated. The personation was so like him in all respects, so far as known to me, that nothing could be more like. Let those who speak with spirits beware therefore lest they be deceived when they say that they are those whom they have known and that have died." (No. 2860.)

From these quotations it seems clear that Swedenborg laboured under few, if any, illusions in his in-

tercourse with spirits. He was no medium, and he did not rely on all that he saw or heard in the spiritual world. He says so unequivocally: "I have had discourse with spirits and angels now for several years, and no spirit has dared, nor has any angel desired, to tell me anything, much less to instruct me in regard to anything of the Word, or of doctrine from the Word, but the Lord alone has taught me" (*Div. Prov.* 135). Thus St. Paul warned his converts not to believe anything contrary to what he had taught them as being the Gospel received by him from the Lord Himself (Gal. i. 12), even if an angel from heaven should come and preach to them any other Gospel (Gal. i. 8). Finally, we have the solemn words uttered by Swedenborg on his deathbed, when the Rev. A. Ferelius, minister of the Swedish Lutheran Church in London, came to administer the Sacrament to him shortly before his death. "I asked him," wrote the minister, "if he thought he was going to die, and he answered in the affirmative; upon which I requested him, since many believed that he invented his new theological system merely to acquire a great name, to take this opportunity of proclaiming the real truth to the world, and to recant either wholly or in part what he had advanced, especially as his pretensions could now be of no further use to him. Upon this Swedenborg raised himself up in bed, and placing his hand upon his breast, said with earnestness: 'Everything that I have written is as true as that you now behold me; I might have said much more, had it been permitted me. After

death you will see all, and then we shall have much to say to each other on this subject.' "

The same Rev. A. Ferelius has also stated his impressions of Swedenborg at an earlier period. " Many would suppose," he has said, " that Assessor Swedenborg was a very eccentric person; but, on the contrary, he was very agreeable and easy in society, conversed on all the topics of the day, accommodated himself to his company, and never alluded to his principles unless he was questioned, in which case he answered freely, just as he wrote of them."

After the great change in 1745, Swedenborg remained indeed the man he was before, healthy and vigorous in his daily life, still a great worker, with the same sense of order, the same comprehensiveness of method; only his style of writing became sensibly modified. His Latin, generally pure and sometimes even elegant in his philosophical works, now becomes simple, dry, and formal. He seems to avoid anything which could in any way add æsthetic effect to the truths he is declaring. This change of style was probably unintentional, perhaps altogether unconscious, but was the result of his intense concentration of thought in endeavouring to convey the sublime themes which, henceforth, were his sole preoccupation. For, from this period, Swedenborg entirely gave up his former studies, even the books so precious and dear to him in the past; and his later writings, although obviously resting upon the substructure of science and philosophy by which

his mind had been prepared, hardly contain an allusion to his previous labours.

On his return from London to Sweden in August 1745, Swedenborg continued to act as Assessor of the Royal Board of Mines till 1747, when he resigned his post, making at the same time the request that the King would permit him to receive only for pension one half of his salary as an Assessor, and that his retirement from office might not be accompanied by any addition (as was probably the custom) to his rank and title. Once free from official duties, Swedenborg began at once the new work to which he believed himself called. He diligently studied Hebrew, to be able to read the O.T. scriptures in the original tongue; he travelled much, to Holland and England especially, in order to publish his books under conditions of greater freedom. When at home, near Stockholm, he spent much of his time in his garden, which he loved, and in which he worked, delighting to think over those correspondences between natural objects and spiritual causes which are so important an element in his doctrine of Life.

The following is a list of his theological works :—

1. *Arcana Cœlestia.* (8 vols. London, 1749–56.) A stupendous production, being a systematic exposition, in Latin, of the internal and spiritual sense of the books of Genesis and Exodus, interspersed with treatises on various doctrinal subjects which in themselves constitute volumes within the volumes which treat specially of the first two books of the

Pentateuch. A translation of this vast work has been published in English under the title: "Heavenly Arcana contained in the Holy Scripture or Word of the Lord unfolded, beginning with the Book of Genesis I, together with wonderful things seen in the world of spirits and in the Heaven of Angels." (12 vols.)

2. *The Last Judgment and Babylon destroyed.*

3. *Heaven and its wonders; also Hell and the Intermediate State.* The substance of this most important book, generally known as *Heaven and Hell*, is already contained in the *Arcana Cœlestia*, but it presents the doctrine of Swedenborg in a more systematic form. It has perhaps had more readers than any of his other theological works. First published, 1758.

4. *The White Horse* (Rev. xix.). Also drawn from the *Arcana Cœlestia.*

5. *The Earths in the Universe, with an account of their Inhabitants, and also of the Spirits and Angels there.* (1758.) The opinion one may form of this remarkable work must, of course, be influenced by the view one takes of Swedenborg's relation of "Things Heard and Seen" by him. As far as one can see, it is a book which no man who wished to make-believe, and was anxious not to compromise the success of his other books, would ever have written. The fact that it was written and published by its author is perhaps the clearest proof of his absolute sincerity and faith in his own statements.

6. *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine.* (London, 1758.) Another evidence of the wonderful

literary activity and industry of Swedenborg in that year 1758. A very useful summary of doctrine, giving abundant references to corresponding subjects in that inexhaustible mine, the *Arcana Cœlestia.*

7. *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem respecting the Lord, the Sacred Scriptures, Life and Faith, or the four leading Doctrines of the New Church signified by the New Jerusalem in Revelation.* (1763.) In those four treatises Swedenborg wrote summaries of the essential points of the teaching he believed himself commissioned to impart to the world through the press, for the use of those who could not or would not seek that teaching in his larger works.

8. *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom.* (Amsterdam, 1763.) Perhaps the most remarkable work of Swedenborg from a philosophical point of view; dealing with those spiritual realities in which human science and angelic wisdom become unified and the two worlds of human experience, the natural and the spiritual, are exhibited in their supreme harmony. This book must always occupy a distinct position in the history of human thought.

9. *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Providence.* A logical complement to the preceding work. (1764.)

10. *The Apocalypse Revealed.* (Amsterdam, 1766.) A valuable specimen of Swedenborg's system of interpretation of Holy Scripture.

11. *The Delights of Wisdom concerning Conjugal Love, after which follow the Pleasures of Insanity con-*

cerning Scortatory Love. (Amsterdam, 1768.) Another very remarkable work on the eternal origin and perpetuity of the relation of the sexes, and the spiritual laws affecting marriage. Facts are faced and treated with a strange mixture of fearlessness and reserve.

12. *The Intercourse between the Soul and the Body.* (1769.) A psychological treatise founded on the principles characteristic of Swedenborg's philosophy.

13. *A Brief Exposition of the Doctrine of the New Church, signified by the New Jerusalem in the Revelation.* (1769.)

14. *The True Christian Religion, or the whole Theology of the New Church.* (London, 1771.) The last book written by Swedenborg. He died in 1772. It is a complete systematic presentation of his system, interspersed with what the author calls *Memorabilia* or memorable relations. Those relations have perhaps made the hardest call upon Swedenborg's readers. Of them we may again say that no man, anxious in a worldly-wise sense to conciliate his readers, would have written and published those *Memorabilia.* But Swedenborg believed himself bound to publish them, and his courage in doing so is the measure of the faith that was in him. A careful and patient reading of those memorable relations leaves us, in the end, under the impression that we should be the poorer in our knowledge of the spiritual world as revealed by Swedenborg, if those relations had not been written.

All these works, written in Latin, were published

in the lifetime of their author. A number of other works, preserved in MSS., have been published since his death, such as *The Apocalypse Explained* (4 vols., London, 1785–89); *The Coronis, or Appendix to the True Christian Religion;* and the *Summary Exposition of the Internal Sense of the Prophets and Psalms.* But of the works thus posthumously published by the persevering devotion of his disciples, the most striking is the *Spiritual Diary*, an immense body of notes, remarks, and memoranda obviously written without any idea of publication—at any rate in the form in which it has reached us. This Diary was written between the years 1747 and 1752, and presents upwards of 5500 entries. In it Swedenborg consigns unadorned descriptions of visions, of the things, places, and people he saw in the spiritual world, of everyday occurrences, of the impressions made upon him by his experiences, all in a matter-of-fact manner as if he was treating of the most ordinary events. For a knowledge and understanding of the inner life of Swedenborg at that period, the *Spiritual Diary* is of unique value.

Swedenborg lived laborious days, and he seems to have enjoyed excellent health during his long life, in spite of his intense and constant application to study and to the composition of his numerous works. We are told that he was rather irregular in his hours of sleep. He just stopped work and went to bed when he felt tired. His meals also were somewhat irregular—at any rate during the latter part of his

life—chiefly consisting of coffee, chocolate and biscuits, taken at odd times. He certainly stands as an example of the amount of work that can be produced by a healthy man on a minimum of food.

After repeated journeys, he finally settled in London, where he enjoyed greater freedom and was able to superintend the publication of his later works. He there led a retired life, but still enjoyed the society of chosen friends and took an interest in the events of the day. It is recorded that he loved children and was a great favourite with them. In his book on *Heaven and Hell*, Swedenborg has told us his views about life. He says: "In order that a man may receive the life of heaven, it is altogether necessary that he live in the world and engage in its duties and occupations. . . . In no other way can spiritual life be formed in a man, or his spirit be prepared for heaven. For to live an internal life and not at the same time an external life, is like dwelling in a house that has no foundation. . . . A life of piety without the life of charity, which can only be lived in the world, does not lead to heaven. But a life of charity does, which consists in acting sincerely and justly in every occupation, in every transaction, and in every work, from an interior, that is from a heavenly origin." In those wise words Swedenborg has condemned the false views of asceticism which have so misinterpreted in the past the Spirit of Christ, but he has at the same time laid down a principle of social conduct without which all attempts

at social reform and social advancement are obviously doomed to failure.

Swedenborg had laid down for himself the following rules :—

1. Often to read and meditate on the Word of God.
2. To submit everything to the will of Divine Providence.
3. To observe in everything a propriety of behaviour, and to keep the conscience clear.
4. To discharge with fidelity the functions of my employment, and to make myself in all things useful to Society.

That he conscientiously observed his own rules seems borne out by Count Höpken's testimony : " I have not only known Swedenborg those two and forty years, but some time since frequented his company daily. I do not recollect to have ever known any man of more uniformly virtuous character than Swedenborg ; always contented, never fretful or morose, although throughout his life his soul was occupied with sublime thoughts and speculations. He was gifted with a most happy genius and a fitness for every science, which made him shine in all those which he embraced."

Of Swedenborg's personal appearance, it is said that he was about five feet nine inches high. He was rather thin, and somewhat dark of complexion. His eyes were brownish grey and rather small. His usual visiting dress was a suit of black velvet, with full ruffles at the wrist, a sword, and a gold-headed cane.

Swedenborg passed away quietly in London on Sunday, March 29, 1772, being then eighty-four years of age. The good people in whose house he lodged have related that he announced to them when his death was to take place, and that he appeared much pleased in making that announcement. He was interred with the usual rites of the Lutheran Church in the Swedish Chapel in Ratcliffe Highway, London, E., and in October of the same year a eulogy was pronounced by a Councillor of the Board of Mines in the Swedish House of Nobles, in the name of the Royal Academy of Stockholm. In our own times, Swedenborg's fame, never forgotten in his own country, received a fresh lustre from an investigation of the numerous unpublished Swedenborg MSS., which has led to the formation of a committee appointed by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, for the purpose of editing the entire series of the scientific and philosophical works in the original languages, Swedish and Latin. Then Sweden grieved that the mortal remains of one of her greatest sons should lie buried in a foreign land. In 1908, at the request of the King of Sweden, the British Government gave its consent to the removal of Swedenborg's remains. A Swedish warship came to receive them, and conveyed them to Sweden. At last, with much befitting ceremony, the body of Swedenborg was deposited in the Cathedral of Upsala, at a spot immediately opposite the monument erected in honour of his great countryman Linnæus.

Thus, in his native land, has been honoured the memory of Emanuel Swedenborg, the man of science and the philosopher. It remains for us to consider, as briefly as the vast subject will permit, the work of Swedenborg as a religious teacher.

CHAPTER II.

SWEDENBORG'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

When Swedenborg, after the great change brought about in him by the mysterious influence which transformed his whole life and gave a new direction to all his interests, set himself "to obey the heavenly vision," he did not cease to be a philosopher in becoming a theologian. But his philosophy assumed a new aspect. His mathematical conceptions, his mechanical theories, his ideas of the development of the world, as given in his *Principia*, remained, but became illuminated by the new light which flooded his whole mind. He saw now clearly what before was vague and obscure to him. Consequently, it is difficult, if not impossible, to draw accurately the line between his philosophy and his theology. Taking our stand upon his great principle that "all religion has relation to life," we may perhaps define his theology as a *Philosophy of Life*, or the heavenly wisdom which realises life as the energy, the affection, and the active power of Love; not love conceived in man alone, but as the poet Wordsworth has expressed it in the well-known lines:

"A sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

The very life of man is his love, says Swedenborg, and such as the love is such is the life, and even such is the whole man. Man knows of the existence, but not the nature of love. To know this, he must know that God, who is Life itself, is Love itself, and Wisdom itself. Love and Wisdom in themselves are substance and form, for they are very Being and Existing; if they were not substance and form, they would merely constitute a creature of reason which in itself has no reality.

Because God is Life, it follows that He is uncreate; life cannot be created, for to be created is to exist from another, and if life existed from another, there would be another being that would be life, and this would be life in itself. How plain it is, again says Swedenborg in another place, that life is not creatable! For what is life but the inmost activity of love and wisdom, which are in God and which are God; no thing created exists, subsists, is acted upon, and moved by itself, but by some other being or agent; whence it follows that everything exists, subsists, is acted upon and moved by the First Being, who has no origin from another, but is in Himself the living force which is life.

We have given these passages in the very words of Swedenborg, to enable the reader to appreciate more directly our author's fundamental conception of life, and also to make sure that we have not, in any way, misrepresented his teaching. We shall, as much as possible, continue to use his own words in our summary of his doctrines, since our object is, not to show what we wish to understand about Swedenborg, but what he has himself taught.

Here, then, we see the starting-point of his Philosophy of Life, which, for him, is a Theology, since God is Life itself. Because life is not creatable, it follows, on one hand, that God is uncreate, and, on the other hand, that God cannot communicate His own life so as to make another being having life in himself which would be life itself. As the reader will readily see, there is some deep philosophy and much difficult theology involved in this principle. In his great work, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, No. 52, Swedenborg says expressly on this point:

"Nothing whatever in the created Universe is a substance and form in itself, or life in itself, or love and wisdom in itself. . . . That which *is*, in itself, is uncreate and infinite; but that which is from this, having nothing about it which is, in itself, is created and finite. And this represents the image of Him from whom it is and exists."

Life as such cannot be created. How, then, shall we account for the existence of living things in the Universe?

"As God alone is substance in itself, and hence

the very Being, it is evident that the existence of things is from no other source." (*D. L. W.* 283.) If so, "every one who thinks with clear reason sees that the universe is not created from nothing, because he sees that it is impossible for anything to be made out of nothing." (*Id.*) Here Swedenborg would seem to profess a doctrine opposed to Christian orthodoxy and leading to Pantheism, but seeing that he has formally repudiated any possible charge of Pantheism in various parts of his works, we must endeavour to grasp his meaning before coming too hastily to a conclusion. St. Paul was no pantheist, yet he could say that in God "we live and move and have our being"; and we find that St. Thomas Aquinas, that great orthodox teacher and profound interpreter of the scholastic philosophy, was not very far from the position adopted by Swedenborg in respect to creation out of nothing. In his *Summa Theologica*, he actually says:

"When it is said that something is made out of nothing, the word 'out' does not indicate a Material Cause, but merely the order according to which the thing is made. Thus when we say: from (out of) the morning comes mid-day, we mean that *after* the morning comes mid-day." * So that, according to the Angelic Doctor, to say that the world was created "out of nothing," would simply mean that it was

* "Cum dicitur aliquid ex nihilo fieri, hæc præpositio ex, non designat Causam Materialem, sed ordinem tantum, sicut cum dicitur: ex mane fit meridies, id est *post* mane fit meridies." —St. Th., Pars I. quæs. 45.

created "after nothing," that is, that there was nothing of the world before it was created, a position which Swedenborg did not mean to dispute. It must not be, however, supposed that St. Thomas Aquinas, in thus speaking, was simply giving utterance to a truism. His object was to affirm against certain heretics that God had not made the world out of a pre-existing matter not created by Him, and in this again Swedenborg agrees with him.

But to say that the world was not created from nothing, in the mind of Swedenborg, raises another and much more difficult question, namely, the procession of what was not from what eternally is. Swedenborg, with irresistible logic, says that "as God alone is the very Being, the existence of things can be from no other source." And Malebranche, the great disciple of Descartes, in his *Méditations Chrétiennes et Métaphysiques*, says practically the same thing:

"There is no relation between Nothingness and Being, and it is not from Nothingness that man has his origin. I (the Lord is supposed to be speaking) am the principle of all things; it is through the infinite power of God that creatures receive existence." *

God, then, the eternal Love, Wisdom and Power,

* "Il n'y a point aussi, mon cher fils, de rapport entre le néant et l'être; et ce n'est pas du néant que tu tiens ton origine. C'est moi qui suis le principe de toutes choses et c'est par la puissance infinie de Dieu que les créatures reçoivent leur existence."—*Méd. Chrét. et Métaphys.*, iv. 1.

in whom are all things, from whom are all things, is for Swedenborg the sole source and cause of all finite existence, spiritual and material. For him, the whole universe is the expression of the spiritual, and the reason why infinite love and infinite intelligence are discernible in it, even to our natural sight, is, because God is in the created universe by immanence, although discreted from it by transcendence; the natural world exists from the Divine, and from that source has whatever intelligibility it possesses for rational beings.*

This view of the Source of all life may help us to understand how Swedenborg came to anticipate the conclusions of many modern scientific thinkers on what is known as "Spontaneous Generation." He was not afraid of any theory of spontaneous generation in Nature; in fact it was for him a necessary postulate since "life is not creatable." He believed that life appeared whenever and wherever suitable physico-chemical conditions rendered that fact possible by making inorganic matter a fit receptacle for the influx of life. It seems clear that, on his own principles, he would not have been afraid even of the idea of a possible spontaneous generation in our laboratories. But we must well understand his position: for a certain biological school, spontaneous generation means to obtain life from no life. For Swedenborg, it meant life taking into relation with itself what before had no intrinsic relation to life.

* "Dieu tire le monde, non du néant qui n'est pas, mais de Lui qui est l'existence absolue."—V. Cousin.

Kant meant as much when he said: "Who will ever be able to say: Give me matter and motion and I will make a snail." Swedenborg's views about evolution were conditioned by the same principles on the nature of life. He recognised that the successive appearance of the many types and species of plants and animals upon the earth was due to processes of an evolutionary character, but for him it was not an evolution of that ultimate Reality which is life, but one of living things; an evolution of the organic receptacles of that life on discrete planes of existence.

Before our attempting to realise even faintly the nature of Creation, our author warns us of the absolute necessity of the conception that God is not in space. "This thought concerning God," he says, "is fundamental, for without it what is to be said of the creation of the universe . . . cannot be retained." He freely grants the difficulty which this idea presents to the natural mind, but thinks that man can sufficiently grasp it "if only he admit something of spiritual light into his thought." For a spiritual conception derives nothing from *space*, but derives its all from *state*. Thus, a truly spiritual conception of love, life, wisdom, &c., has in itself nothing in common with space. In fact, we are told, the conception of distances in space is no other than as of distances of good or distances of truth, which are affinities and likenesses according to their states. (*D. L. W.* 72.)

It is vain to pretend that such notions are easy to

grasp, but we can hardly resist the conclusion that in this fundamental thought of Swedenborg there lies a profound truth. By a mere natural act of the human intellect we cannot fully comprehend that the Divine is everywhere and yet not in space; that God is "in space without space"; psychological experiences and mental representations cannot be dealt with with a yard-measure. But they can include relations to concepts of space which yet do not make them, in themselves, spatially measurable. The difficulty is to say positively how far Swedenborg's teaching here is idealistic, in view of the fact that he seems elsewhere to affirm the reality of the material world in unequivocal terms. In any case, we note his fundamental proposition: "God is not in space," feeling assured that no other conclusion is rationally possible.

We now come to Swedenborg's doctrine of Creation. "There are two worlds," he says, "the spiritual and the natural; and the spiritual world derives nothing from the natural world, nor the natural world from the spiritual world. They are altogether distinct." (*D. L. W.* 83.) We shall see further on in what way, given such a distinction, they communicate with each other.

Then he goes on to say: Spiritual things cannot proceed from any other source than from love, and love cannot proceed from any other source than from God, who is Love itself. The first Proceeding from that Love is the spiritual Sun from which all spiritual things issue as from their fountain; this sun is pure

love, yet it is not God, but is from God; it is the proximate sphere about Him from Him. Through this sun the universe was created by God, the word "universe" including all the worlds and systems of worlds which are, as we know, "as the stars for multitude." From the heat proceeding from that sun, angels and men derive whatever will and love they have, and from its light all their understanding and wisdom.

The expanse of the centre of life thus constituted is what is meant by the spiritual world, but let it be carefully remembered that as space and time cannot be predicated of love and wisdom, but only states, therefore the *expanse* around the sun of the angelic heaven is not an *extense*. This statement brings us back to the difficult question already discussed, since we are distinctly told that that spiritual expanse is the extense of all natural things and present "with all living subjects, according to their reception." We must not, however, allow ourselves to be unduly surprised and puzzled by this idea of a spiritual sun as the first Proceeding from the ultimate Reality. For Swedenborg, there are two worlds, distinct from each other, but absolutely corresponding in every detail each with the other. There are not two ideas of existence in the Divine Mind, but only one, although that one idea may be considered under two aspects; hence if we find in the universe a sun (or any number of similar suns) which is the source of heat and light for the system derived from it, we must assume that that sun is the representation to

us of a spiritual reality to which the name of "Sun" may also, without incongruity, be applied, and which must also be considered as the spiritual source of heat and light. It is easy to express surprise at the idea of a sun; it is not perhaps so easy to say what other spiritual term Swedenborg could have used to convey the notion of correspondence. Are not our abstract and even our most metaphysical terms derived from material notions and material objects? Are not some of the most lovely images of our poetry borrowed from the natural world? Was Keble going too far when he sang

"Sun of my Soul, Thou Saviour dear!"?

No, it is useless to quarrel with Swedenborg about his thought of a spiritual sun. We must simply realise the thought he meant to convey.

There are, then, we are told, two suns by which all things of creation are what they are, the sun of the spiritual world and the sun of the natural world, because "the spiritual world and the natural world are similar, with the only difference that each and everything in the spiritual world is spiritual, and each and everything in the natural world is natural." (*D. L. W.* 174.)

Obviously, Swedenborg, by the natural world, meant the world constituted by our solar system, the conditions of which are alone more or less accessible to our direct observation. He could not have meant that our sun was the centre and sole source of heat and light and life in the universe. Any other

sun in the starry heavens stands therefore in a similar relation to Swedenborg's "spiritual sun" as our own sun does. Our natural sun, derived from the sun of the angelic heaven, consists of created substances, the activity of which produces fire. (*T. C. R.* 472.) It is, says Swedenborg, "pure fire," and therefore lifeless, and since nature, in our solar system, derives its origin from that sun, it is also lifeless; such life as is found on the earth is solely derived from the living power proceeding from the sun of the spiritual world.

The two worlds, spiritual and natural, being alike, therefore in both there are atmospheres, waters, earths, as the general principles from which everything is constituted with infinite variety. The difference, however, between the spiritual atmospheres and the natural is that the spiritual atmospheres are receptacles of divine fire and divine light, thus of love and wisdom, while the natural atmospheres are not receptacles of divine fire and light, but of the fire and light of their own sun, which, as already stated, is devoid of life. Still, those natural atmospheres are surrounded by the spiritual atmospheres proceeding from the spiritual sun. This essential contiguity of the spiritual and the natural in all creation is an original idea in Swedenborg's system, without which we cannot follow his complex descriptions of it.

Treating of the origin of matter, such as that which makes up the crust of our earth, he considers matter to be "the end and termination" of the natural

atmospheres whose heat has ended in cold, and light in darkness, and whose activity has passed into inertness.* This notion of inertness, somewhat dis-

* The reader may experience some difficulty in reconciling this view of the origin of earthy substances with the nebular hypothesis of Swedenborg himself, who first, before Laplace, expressed the idea that the entire solar system has formed itself out of a chaotic mass which, first rolling itself into a sphere, afterwards threw off a ring which ultimately broke into parts which have themselves finally contracted into the present planets. It may be asked: If the planets of our solar system originate from the solar matter, how can it be said that the matter, say, of the earth, is the end and termination of the natural atmospheres proceeding from the sun? An answer to this must largely depend on the strict scientific value of the terms employed, but Swedenborg can hardly have contradicted himself on a point which was so obviously before his mind in all its aspects. When the earth, according to the nebular hypothesis, became separated from the sun, it gradually underwent the cooling from which have resulted the conditions of its crust, and this, no doubt, represents the process described by Swedenborg as termination "in ultimates" of the activity of the natural atmospheres. This process, accomplished away from the sun, must, according to the nebular hypothesis, have begun either when the ring from which the planets have originated left the sun, or after it had left it. In either case, the later modifications of the ring and of its parts would take place in the atmospheres surrounding the sun, namely, the aura, ether, and air, according to Swedenborg, but we do not know where those atmospheres begin. Perhaps they are already present *within* what appears to us to be the surface of the sun; perhaps the formation of a ring of fiery substance and its separation from the sun was an effect of the activity of those atmospheres. If so, the difficulty in question would cease to exist. In our present state of knowledge, we are not, at any rate, in a position to prove that Swedenborg has contradicted himself. Remembering that besides air, which is composed of gases, ether, one of his "atmospheres," is for him the medium of heat and light waves, and of magnetic and electrical phenomena, we are still less in a position to assert that the "natural atmos-

concerting to us with our modern physical ideas, must not, however, be taken too strictly, for Swedenborg is careful to state (*D. L. W.* 303) that when the expansion and activity of the natural atmosphere cease in ultimates, the resulting substances and matters of which the earth is composed "retain from the atmospheres whence they originated an effort and endeavour to produce uses." The "inertness" of matter is therefore more apparent than real, for by "use" (another important technical expression in Swedenborg's works) is meant "all goods that exist in act," and those goods include all things that appear on the earth, such as plants and animals of every kind. (*D. L. W.* 336.)

Of that gradual evolution of all things, atmospheres, suns, earths, and all that the uses of earths can produce, Swedenborg entertains no doubt whatever. Those, he says, who do not evolve the creation of the universe and all things therein by continual mediations from the First (the sun of the spiritual world, whose First is God Himself) cannot but build hypotheses that are incoherent and disconnected from their causes. (*D. L. W.* 303.) But his view of evolution, partly so like modern views of evolution, differs from them, as we have already said, in some very essential particulars: first, there has been an evolution, if we may so speak, from (not of) a first

pheres" have not been and are not concerned in the formation of worlds out of nebulæ, such as those we are able to observe, through modes of activity in those atmospheres of which we are ignorant.

principle to ultimates; then uses in those ultimates (always under the guiding energy of that principle, working through the successive degrees it has caused to be) have determined an evolution no longer centrifugal but centripetal, not away from life, but tending step by step towards higher expressions of life. Swedenborg's evolution may be represented by a tree in its biological details, but in its *ensemble* it must be represented by a circle in which all flows from life and ultimately tends to life. His evolution is a vast scheme, implying not merely the evolution of plants, animals, and man, but also that of worlds and of the material substances of which they are composed; it is the evolution of all created existence. This cosmic process is produced and governed by what Swedenborg regularly calls "influx." It is the Truth from the infinite Divine Being Himself which, proceeding through the successive mediums of created existence, reaches even to the last things in nature and in man.

For Swedenborg, therefore, all things exist and are maintained through influx, that is, through the operation of Life itself according to a series of receptive forms or planes, each separated from the other by a distinct degree, until Life reaches the plane which, to us, is the plane of time and space.

Every created thing,

> "Up from the creeping plant to sovereign man,"

is a recipient of life. This thought being fundamental in this philosophy, has to be constantly recalled.

The recipient, such as it is, by its extent, quality and character, determines the degree of reception of influx. Thus, the transcendent influx which brings us within the sphere of the Divine Immanence is everywhere active, but we witness its operation more especially within ourselves in the mysterious intercourse between the soul and the body, between the interior form and the exterior form of man.

The external world, according to Swedenborg, who here was influenced by Cartesian ideas, is an indispensable outward *condition* of sensation, under present terrestrial relations. These last words raise important questions affecting the modes of existence of the future life, and perhaps also the nature of the material world. In this life, at any rate, the external world represented, say, in the case of sight, by the luminiferous ether, comes into contact with the organ of sense, the eye; this contact forms what we may call a basis for the reception of the influx from the soul; a change of state takes place in the organ of sight, and into that change of state the influx from the soul descends, and the specific sensation is experienced by the subject who sees.

Thus, in a manner which, for obvious reasons, baffles scientific inquiry, our own self becomes consciously modified in presence of a change in the material substance to which it is vitally related. In plain words, this means that between consciousness and physical motion there is a gulf which cannot be bridged.

Swedenborg, in particular, always insists upon the

fact that the eye itself does not see. This doctrine is far from new. To the Pythagorean philosopher Epicharmus, who flourished about 450 B.C., is attributed a saying which may be thus rendered :

> " What sees is mind, what hears is mind ;
> All things else are deaf and blind."

On the other hand, only recently, Dr. Haldane, of Oxford, has written that " the popular idea that the progress of physiology is in the direction of confirming or supporting the mechanical conception of life is a complete illusion." The doctrine of Swedenborg, as contained in his conception of Spiritual Influx, would therefore seem to be at once very old and very modern. To explain the nature of influx, Swedenborg compares the various things of nature, even the mind of man, to vessels or receptacles into which the spiritual power of influx is poured. Life is not creatable, but it can be communicated to forms in the measure of their organic adaptability for receiving it. He says in his *Arcana Cœlestia*, No. 880 :

" There are three things in man which concur and unite—the Natural, the Spiritual, the Celestial. His natural receives no life except from the spiritual, nor his spiritual except from the celestial, nor his celestial except from the Lord alone, who is Life itself. The natural is a receptacle which receives, or vessel into which is poured, the spiritual, and the spiritual is a receptacle or vessel into which is poured the celestial. Thus, through the celestial, life is received from the Lord. Such is the order of influx." This brings us

to another fundamental doctrine in Swedenborg's philosophy, namely, his doctrine of Degrees. We shall best approach this all-important subject in his own words :

" The knowledge of Degrees is, as it were, the key to open the causes of things and give entrance into them. Without this knowledge scarcely anything of Cause can be known, for the objects and subjects of both worlds appear, without this knowledge, of one significance, as if there were nothing in them, except of such a nature as that which is seen with the eye. . . . Unless Degrees are understood, the interior things which lie concealed can by no means be discovered, for exterior things advance to interior, and these to inmost, by degrees, not by continuous but by discrete degrees." (*D. L. W.* 184.)

" Degrees are of two kinds : there are continuous degrees and degrees that are not continuous, discrete degrees. Continuous degrees are as the degrees of diminution of light, from the flame to darkness, or as the degrees of diminution of light, from the things that are in the light to those that are in the shade. Distance determines these degrees.

" But non-continuous or discrete degrees are distinguished as prior and posterior, as cause and effect, as that which produces and that which is produced. . . . He who does not acquire a perception of these degrees can by no means have a knowledge of the distinctions of the heavens, and the distinctions of the interior and exterior faculties of man, nor of the distinction between the spiritual world and the

natural world, nor of the distinction between the spirit of man and his body, and therefore cannot understand what and whence correspondences and representations are, nor what is the nature of influx." (*H. H.* 38.)

"All things, even the least that exist in the spiritual world and in the natural world, co-exist from discrete degrees and at the same time from continuous degrees, or from degrees of height and degrees of breadth. . . . When degrees of height or discrete degrees are in successive order, they may be compared to a column divided into three degrees through which there is an ascent and descent. But the simultaneous order which consists of similar degrees presents another appearance. In this order, the highest things of successive order which are the most perfect and beautiful are in the inmost; the lower things are in the middle, and the lowest in the circumference. They are as in a solid consisting of these three degrees, in the centre of which are the most subtle parts, around this are the less subtle parts, and in the extremes which form the circumference are the parts composed of these and therefore the grosser. It is like the column mentioned above, subsiding into a plane, the highest part of which forms the inmost, the middle part forms the intermediate and the lowest forms the extreme." (*D. L. W.* 205.)

To understand clearly the meaning and importance of discrete degrees, we must now take up the subject from a higher point of view from which the whole subject can be considered. In the whole realm of

Being, Swedenborg discerns the constant presence of three essentials without which nothing can be conceived as existing. These are End, Cause, and Effect. The end is the purpose for which a thing exists (*causa finalis*); the cause is the law or the manner by which it exists (*causa efficiens*); and the effect is the thing resulting from the operation of the cause. These three terms connote discrete degrees, because any transmutation of one into either of the others is impossible. Thus the end or purpose may actuate the cause, but it can never become identical with it; the cause may reside within and actuate the effect, but it cannot become identical with the effect. Let us take as an example another series of discrete degrees, the psychological trine—will, intellect, action. Will may determine the intellect in this or that way, and both will and intellect may thus attain expression in the form of bodily action or of significant speech. Yet, all the while, will has not become intellect, and intellect has not become identified with speech or action; these three degrees are discrete, not continuous. They do not represent the more or less of a thing; they represent fundamental distinctions.

In the same way the trine, God, spirit, the natural world, are discrete degrees: God is the end, the reason and the centre of all existence; spirit is the cause through which and within which God's purpose is realised; the natural world is the effect. The spiritual cause is in the effect as God is in the cause, yet God, spirit, the natural world remain eternally

distinct as discrete degrees; they represent, to use the language of Swedenborg, degrees of height, not merely degrees of breadth. They are distinguished as prior and posterior; the prior within the posterior but not part of it; the prior does not gradually pass into the posterior as white may pass into black by a gradual diminution of light.

The reader will easily see the immense importance and the philosophical consequences of such a conception. It means that between God and nature a distinction subsists which implies immanence but affirms transcendence; that between spirit and matter a distinction subsists which forbids the notion that what we call spirit is but the product of material evolution. It means that Pantheism is a false conception of the Divine activity, and materialism a false interpretation of scientific facts. This is undoubtedly what Swedenborg means, in the passage quoted above, where he says that "without this knowledge (of discrete degrees) scarcely anything of cause can be known, for the objects and subjects of both worlds (the spiritual world and the natural world) appear without this knowledge, of one significance." That is, they appear as being merely the surface extension of the same thing, as would be the gradual extension of a drop of oil on a piece of blotting paper. We cannot therefore reject this conception of discrete degrees as given by Swedenborg without taking up a philosophical position which must materially affect our view of modern science and our theological attitude. His doctrine on this

point is perhaps one of the most far-reaching conclusions in a system replete with profound speculations and suggestive thoughts.

As Dr. Frank Sewall, treating of this same subject,* has finely said: "These discrete degrees are thus essentially constructive degrees; they are productive, even dynamic in character, as they imply the action of one force through various *media* under a fixed law. The force is life itself; the *media* are the series, orders and degrees through which life descends from its source to its ultimates; the descent itself is influx, and the law of relation and adaptation by which the descent is possible is the Law of Correspondence."

This law is another conception in Swedenborg's philosophy which is intimately related to the law of discrete degrees. It means that each thing in the natural world *corresponds* to something in the spiritual world, in other words, that there is a positive relation between the world of causes and the world of effects. These two orders of existence are in themselves discrete; they admit of no confusion, but they *communicate* by a perfect correspondence between the spiritual and the natural. Such correspondence must not be confounded with mere metaphors, comparisons or symbols, for the relation between spiritual and natural things is a causal relation, and not merely one of resemblance or analogy. Thus the affections belonging to the mind, says Swedenborg, are represented plainly in the face

* *Swedenborg and the "Sapientia Angelica,"* by Frank Sewall, M.A., D.D., p. 72.

through the various expressions of the countenance, not by some sort of analogy, but in virtue of an essential relation caused by the mind's activity upon the body. In the same way, "each and all things in the spiritual world are represented in the natural world, because the internal (clothes) itself with appropriate things in the external, whereby it presents itself visibly and becomes apparent. The end thus clothes itself with suitable things so as to present itself as the cause in a lower sphere, and afterwards as the effect in a sphere lower still, and when the end through the cause becomes the effect, it becomes visible, that is, it appears before the eyes." (*A. C.* 5711.)

Thus Swedenborg accounts for the relation which many thinkers, since the days of Plato, have discerned between spirit and matter, between appearance and reality, between divine ideas and visible phenomena.

Every form of existence is conceived as endowed with two aspects, one identified with the spiritual realm of causes, the other participating in the phenomenal, transient show of the natural world. Those two aspects, without losing their discrete existence, unite for us in the mind when consciousness under the operation of spiritual influx rises to the full sense of object-representation. Correspondence, as understood by Swedenborg, thus brings us in presence of the central and most mysterious problem of human psychology. But the doctrine of correspondence logically carries our author much further still. By it he reaches the solution of another

fundamental problem in Christian Theology. For, given that everything in nature has a spiritual meaning and therefore expresses some divine end, he is able to conclude that if God has " at sundry times and in divers manners " revealed Himself to mankind, using for that purpose some of the languages spoken among men, such a revelation, in terms expressive of natural things and ideas, must contain a spiritual meaning. If, for instance, there is a correspondence between water or bread, or a tree or a stone, and certain spiritual concepts founded on Divine Truth, then an understanding of what those spiritual concepts are will enable us to see the internal or spiritual sense of water or a tree or a stone, as those terms appear in the literal sense given through men to men in revelation. All that is required is that we should in some way be able to learn what is the internal sense of such natural objects.

It is obvious that, in many cases, such an internal or spiritual sense would considerably relieve our perplexities in reading the sacred text, and might even contribute to a strengthening of our faith in its sacredness. Swedenborg, in his quaint style, deals very plainly with this question in his work on *The True Christian Religion*, the last book published by him shortly before his death. He says :

" It is in the mouth of all that the Word is from God, is divinely inspired, and therefore holy. But yet it has been unknown hitherto where within it its divinity resides. For, in the letter, the word

appears like a common writing, in a foreign style, neither lofty nor luminous as, to appearance, secular writings are. From this it is that a man . . . may easily fall into error concerning the Word and even into contempt for it, and say within himself when he is reading it: What is this? What is that? Is this divine? Can God who has infinite wisdom speak thus? Where and from whence is its holiness but from religious feeling, and thence persuasion?

" . . . Thus, no man who does not know that there is any spiritual sense in the Word, like the soul in the body, can judge of the word otherwise than from its literal sense. . . . So long as this is not known, it is not to be wondered at if this casket (the letter of Scripture) should be estimated only according to the value of the material of it which appears to the eye."

" Without the spiritual sense, no one could know why the prophet Jeremiah was commanded to buy himself a girdle and put it on his loins, and not to draw it through the waters, but to hide it in the hole of a rock by the Euphrates (Jer. xiii. 1–7); or why the prophet Isaiah was commanded to loose the sackcloth from off his loins, and to put off his shoe from off his foot, and go naked and barefoot three years (Isa. xx. 2, 3); or why the prophet Ezekiel was commanded to pass a razor upon his head and upon his beard, and afterwards to divide the hairs of them and burn a third part in the midst of the city, smite a third part with the sword, scatter a third part in the wind, and bind a little of them in his skirts, and

at last to cast them into the midst of the fire (Ezek. v. 1–4)." (*S. S.* 16.)

But while Swedenborg shows how hopeless it is to discover a reasonable and a profitable meaning in these and many other passages of Scripture, unless they mean something beyond and above their literal sense, it must not be supposed that he has no respect for that sense. The letter may kill unless it be vivified by the spirit, but nevertheless the letter is precious in his eyes. In the sense of the letter, the Word, he says, is in its fulness, its holiness, and its power, because the two prior or interior senses which are called the spiritual and the celestial, exist simultaneously in the natural sense. This sense is "the basis and the foundation of its spiritual and celestial senses." And in another place he actually states that "the doctrine of the Church must be confirmed from the literal sense of the Word in order that there may be any sanctity and power in it; and indeed from those books of the Word in which there is a spiritual sense." (*A. E.* 816.)

This last remark raises another important question, that of the Canon of Holy Scripture. We know how difficult that question has proved to be, and how little church history and internal criticism have helped to solve it, apart from the recognition of an infallible authority divinely commissioned to say which books belong to the Canon and which books must be rejected. Swedenborg's Law of Correspondence comes to solve the problem independently of general Councils or *ex cathedra* definitions, or

Higher Criticism or pragmatic Modernism. The books of the Word, he says, are "all those that have an internal sense and those that have not are not the Word." That is to say, those books alone are Scripture which are written according to the Law of Correspondence; those books in which that law is not verified may be most valuable and useful, but they are not "the Word."

Thus, in the New Testament, Swedenborg, guided by that rule, finds "the Word" only in the four Gospels and the Apocalypse. "The style of the (other) dogmatic writings is quite different." This, of course, excludes all the epistles of St. Paul and all the other epistles, as well as the Book of Acts. Those documents, says Swedenborg, are "excellent books for the Church," but nevertheless they do not contain a spiritual sense; they mean what they say, and no more; their authority is human, not divine. They are not "the Word."

In the Old Testament, according to the same principle, Ruth, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs are found not to be written "in the style of the Word." They are not, therefore, part of the Canon of Holy Scripture. To some readers this revelation will come as a shock; to others, no doubt, it may bring a sense of relief, since some of the books thus excluded from the Old Testament and from the New present special difficulties, and have not been accorded a place in the Canon without much controversy in the past.

To return to the question of Swedenborg's profound veneration for the Bible, when thus defined by the application of his doctrine of Correspondence, we may quote his own words (*T. C. R.* 191), so characteristic of the man and of his spirit:

"Man has life through the Word. But it should be well known that they only obtain life from the Word who read it for the purpose of drawing divine truths from it, as from their fountain, and for the purpose at the same time of applying the divine truths thence drawn to the life; and that the contrary takes place with those who read the Word for the purpose of acquiring honour and worldly gain."

But, it may be asked: Did Swedenborg originate the idea of an internal or spiritual sense within the letter of Holy Scripture? We know from the testimony of history that he did not. Long before the Christian era, there was an allegorical method of interpretation among the Jews, and that method was not merely born of a desire to meet the attacks of an advancing civilisation, for we find it existing long before the Jewish people had begun to hold any regular political and commercial intercourse with the Græco-Roman world. "It is more than likely," says Hermann Olshausen, "that, in their studies on the sacred books, all educated Jews looked upon the plain meaning of words as being only the shell within which was contained a profound spiritual sense. All their intellectual culture consisted in the knowledge and research of that spiritual sense."

Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, wrote that "the

Spirit of God had caused to be written some things which are absolutely incomprehensible, about acts often improper and unworthy whose inner significance must be sought out by men gifted with the necessary discernment by a spiritual interpretation"; and when the historian Josephus says, "that in the books of Moses there are certain things which that great prophet has only indicated, and others which he has only communicated under the veil of pious allegories," he obviously is alluding to a similar principle of Hermeneutics.

That St. Paul, himself "a Pharisee of the Pharisees," recognised the same principle, at any rate within certain limits, is evident from many passages in his epistles, notably in the Epistle to the Galatians and the Epistles to the Corinthians, whose Pauline authorship is generally accepted.

Clement of Alexandria (*circ.* 189 A.D.) strongly opposed the idea that the Scriptures have only a literal sense, and was thus led into a symbolism which often renders allegory as unsatisfactory and obscure as the letter itself. But the point is that he enjoyed a high reputation as a master of exegesis and as head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria.

Origen (185–254), who succeeded Clement, is a much greater man in every respect. His vast learning eminently qualified him for the work of his life, the scientific exegesis of Holy Scripture; and the first principle of his exegesis was that the cause of so many false opinions about God and divine things is "the fact that the Scriptures are not understood

in their spiritual sense, but only interpreted according to the letter."

In his work "*against Celsus*," which is professedly an apologetical book, Origen, refuting the sneers of Celsus about the creation of Eve, the serpent tempting her, and the fall of Adam, dictinctly says: "Celsus is pretending to ignore that such things are to be explained allegorically." This is just what Swedenborg has taught, only his Law of Correspondence is not a system of mere allegory.

In the same work, however, occurs the following passage which would seem to show that Origen had some idea of a method of interpretation founded on correspondences:

"Those writings of Moses and the Prophets, the most ancient of all books, acknowledge that all the things which we see in this world and whose use is common among men, have other things of the same name *responding* to them, which are the real things. For instance, these books speak to us of a true light, of a heaven other than the visible firmament, and of a Sun of righteousness which differs from the visible sun."

Nevertheless, Origen's interpretation is mainly allegorical, and therefore failed to yield that spiritual sense after which his religious mind hungered and thirsted, and the existence of which was his main theological principle. After Origen, Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa his brother, St. Gregory Nazianzen, all follow him in their search after a spiritual sense on allegorical

lines. In the West, the same tendency, with perhaps more soberness of expression, is noticeable, but with hardly more soberness of method. For we often find not one internal sense taught, but three or four, which came to be formulated, as a help to memory, in the following Latin verses :

> " Litera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
> Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia." *

The Middle Ages, with more or less caution, remained faithful to the exegetical ideas of the early Fathers. Then we come to the sixteenth century and the rise of Protestantism, when a great change took place in the form and spirit of Bible interpretation. It may appear strange, but it seems to be a fact that the Reformers did not formulate any special method of exegesis. Calvin, in his *Institutes*, declares that the authority of the Scriptures is certain, its inspiration beyond doubt, and that it is impious to say that the authority of the Bible is depending upon the judgment of the Church, but he does not say anything definite as to how the real meaning of the sacred books is to be obtained. It must nevertheless be recognised that Calvin, justly shocked by the unmeasured abuse of allegory in the past, was naturally inclined to seek the truth exclusively in the literal sense. He seems to have pronounced the allegorical method to be " an invention of Satan." Luther and Melanchthon did not think differently.

* The letter deals with facts ; allegory says what must be believed ; the moral sense what must be done ; the anagogical sense, whither we should be tending.

The fact is that the early Reformers, absorbed in the arduous task of repelling the attacks of the Church and asserting their fundamental doctrines, chiefly insisted on "justification by faith" and the "authority of the Scriptures," and it was of great importance to their theological position that the Bible should be considered as a book which means just what it says and which he who runs may read and understand without having recourse to the subtleties of an internal sense, except in those places where a spiritual sense is obviously signified. The sixteenth century still permitted this attitude, since there were no scientific objections nor Higher Criticism to be met. Protestant theology thus assumed a position the danger of which only became apparent at a later period.

The danger is fully realised to-day, as is shown by the difficulties experienced in all the Protestant Churches, with scarcely any exception. It is more and more felt that, unless a higher meaning can be attached to certain things, those things must go, with much connected with them which has been considered as religious truth in the past. The situation is only made more delicate in the case of those ancient Churches which, founded on a principle of authority, are tied to definite interpretations by "infallible" decisions. But the position of the Protestant Reformers, unsupported on one hand by traditional authority, and on the other mined and countermined by modern science, is, no doubt, in more immediate danger, given human nature as it

is. In his recent work *Letter or Symbol?* Mr. Charles Byse of Lausanne has well summed up the difficulties of the situation: "The dogma of inspiration, as established by Protestant orthodoxy, has become unacceptable for all educated minds. You will say: It has been modified. Yes, no doubt, but those modifications logically lead to a denial of the dogma in question, and this amounts to giving up the position of Protestantism."

We hope that this somewhat lengthy historical digression will appear to be justified by the importance of the question raised by Swedenborg's teaching concerning the literal and spiritual senses in what he considers to be alone "the Word." Swedenborg did not originate, as we have said, the idea of a spiritual sense; the need of such a sense had been felt long before his time, and in proposing one, not as devised by himself, but, as he believed, revealed to him in its most minute details, he was only giving effect to an idea, vaguely, obscurely expressed in an allegorical manner, but firmly and constantly felt, at least since the days of Philo, of Clement of Alexandria, of Origen, down to the times of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. His attitude represents, however, something more than a return to pre-reformation methods, since his Law of Correspondence has nothing to do with any mere system of allegorical interpretation. For him, Correspondence is not simply a way of escape out of a dilemma created by the irresistible advance of human thought. It is a science founded on a causal relation. His

position will not, of course, be appreciated by those to whom all ideas of a revelation, however philosophical in their presentation, are essentially repugnant, but those minds which welcome ideals felt to be the logical outcome of higher views on life, on nature, and on man, may be interested by a doctrine which, by the side of revealed Truth, still finds a place for human reason and scientific facts.

We should, however, fail in what we consider to be our duty in writing this little book if we did not here put clearly before our readers the real difficulty in connection with the Law of Correspondence. It is obvious that we may, especially if we have read Plato to some purpose, experience little difficulty in accepting the principle of a correspondence between the phenomenal and the real, between things in the natural world, and ideas, thoughts, mental images or visions, whatever be the name we choose to attach to things in the spiritual world. The trouble begins when we seek to know which things in one world are correspondentially related to certain things in the other world. The problem had no doubt appeared in these terms to such men as Philo or Origen or St. Augustine of Hippo, but the difficulties were such that in the end they had to fall back upon such allegories as seemed to be permitted or invited by the text, or—possibly—were required to meet a theological argument. Swedenborg in this matter does not apparently take the slightest care to spare our susceptibilities. He is so assured of his position, so clear as to the message he brings, that

he at once puts things before us without hardly any preparatory explanation. I well know, he says, that people will not receive my message, but "I have seen and heard," and therefore must deliver it. Swedenborg declares unhesitatingly that "enlightenment is from the Lord alone," by which is meant that the problem of correspondences cannot be solved by man's own efforts or intellectual subtlety. Then comes this solemn statement already quoted: "Since the Lord cannot manifest Himself in Person and yet has foretold that He would come and establish a New Church which is the New Jerusalem, it follows that this will be effected by means of a man who is able not only to receive the doctrines of that Church into his understanding, but also to publish them by the Press. I testify in truth that the Lord manifested Himself to me His servant, and sent me to this office; and that afterwards He opened the sight of my spirit, and so intromitted me into the spiritual world, and has granted me to see the heavens and the hells, and also to converse with angels and spirits, and this now continually for many years; likewise, that from the first day of that calling I have not received anything whatever relating to the doctrines of that Church from any angel, but from the Lord alone while I was reading the Word."

This solemn declaration occurs in the *True Christian Religion*, printed in London in 1771; in March of the following year Swedenborg died. It may therefore be considered as his last word on the subject.

In another work (*Apoc. Expl.* 1183) Swedenborg

has even more distinctly stated the facts. He says: "It has been given me to perceive distinctly what comes from the Lord and what from the angels; what has come from the Lord has been written, and what from the angels has not been written."

In his *Spiritual Diary*, not written for publication but embodying his private thoughts, remarks, and experiences from day to day, Swedenborg allows us to follow the workings of his mind while he endeavoured to distinguish what he should preserve for use and what he should reject out of the multitude of sights and impressions represented before him. He says (to himself):

"Whenever there has been any representation, vision, or conversation, I was kept interiorly and most deeply in reflection upon it, as to what therefrom was useful and good, so that I might learn about it. Thus have I been instructed, therefore, by no spirit, nor by any angel, but by the Lord only, from whom is all truth and good. On the contrary, when they wished (the spirits) to instruct me on various subjects, there was scarcely anything but what was false; for which reason I was prohibited from believing anything they said. . . . Moreover, when they wished to persuade me, I perceived an interior or inmost persuasion that it is so—not as they wished—at which they also marvelled. The perception was manifest but cannot easily be described to the apprehension of Man." (*S. D.* 1647.)

This passage is important, because it clearly shows that there was nothing that might be described as

definitely ecstatic in the spiritual state which Swedenborg calls "the opening of his internal sight." He was able coolly to watch the process, to distinguish between his impressions, to see what efforts were made to deceive him, and finally to reject any testimony which an "inmost persuasion" showed him not to proceed from Him alone who had come to prepare him for "this office."

His remarks about the veracity of spirits in general, or at any rate of some spirits to whom he refers, are very interesting. It is clear that whatever view we may be disposed to take of Swedenborg's spiritual experiences, he cannot justly be accused of excessive credulity. But those remarks explain also his great objectior to spiritism in any form. Those who seek knowledge through such practices, he says, do so at their spiritual peril. For those spirits have "a passion for inventing; whenever any subject of conversation is presented, they think they know it, and give their opinions upon it." This is sad, but not incredible, for we all know of spirits still in the body here below who are only too much inclined to act in the same way.

But we have already alluded to this subject in Chapter I., p. 26.

From the various passages we have quoted out of Swedenborg's later works, it will appear that he does not claim for his doctrinal writings anything at all corresponding to the inspiration which he asserts to belong to the books of the "Word." In that sense, he was not "inspired." Yet what he

does claim is in itself very great, for it amounts to a distinct and special direction implying a power of selection and of intuitive perception of truth which if not "inspiration" in a specific sense, at any rate led to the discovery of the higher meaning of the inspired text, through an acquired knowledge of those correspondences between spiritual things and things natural, which no unaided natural mind can surely discern. For "enlightenment is from the Lord alone."

Such is the difficulty in this supreme question plainly stated. It was necessary to make it clearly understood before we approach the consideration of Swedenborg's specific theological doctrines, since they are all founded upon the assumption that they are related to things "seen and heard," and that the meaning of correspondences has been derived, not from imagination, fanciful likenesses, or allegorical devices, but from actual "seeing and hearing," We shall not, of course, presume to press any particular view upon our readers on this most serious question. It raises scientific and philosophical problems which are not new. Former generations of learned men, since the days of Swedenborg, have believed that they had finally settled such problems either by denying the truth of alleged facts, or by explaining them, as they thought, in a rational manner. Some scientific men, such as Dr. Maudsley, have gone so far as to attribute the whole matter to mental derangement and hallucination. That physiologist based his opinion largely upon the fact that

Swedenborg in his scientific days had invented a kind of aeroplane. He thought it positive evidence of madness in a man to have imagined that aviation could ever become a practical proposition! To-day Dr. Maudsley would have had to revise his opinions, at any rate, concerning aeroplanes. And we find that, in these days, men are revising their opinions on other things also. A deeper knowledge of psychological states; new views on the nature of matter, on ether, on cosmic continuity in the universe; new arguments, such as those brought forward by Dr. Haldane of Oxford or by Monsieur Henri Bergson, in favour of a view of life which radically excludes any purely materialistic interpretations of it, must be carefully considered.

Only a few months ago, in a remarkable article published in the *Contemporary Review*, on "The Spiritual Significance of Nature," Sir William Barrett did not hesitate to define a miracle as "essentially the direct control by mind of matter outside the organism." In other words, said the distinguished physicist, a miracle means "a super-normal and incomprehensible manifestation of mind. As such, miracles did not cease with the Apostolic Age, but have continued down to the present time."

In view of such statements and of many others which clearly indicate at the present day a trend of thought away from past materialistic affirmations and towards a more and more spiritual interpretation of living phenomena, readers will perhaps be disposed to suspend their judgment and to see what came, as

a system of philosophy and religion, from those wonderful spiritual states, and those constant relations with the other world, which Swedenborg simply but unhesitatingly affirms to have co-existed within him with the normal conditions of everyday life. Given the present state of our psychological knowledge, it seems clear that we are to-day less than ever in a position to reason *a priori* on the possibilities of the case. All we can do is to examine the results obtained, and weigh them without prejudice. We believe that Swedenborg himself would have asked for no more from any conscientious student of his works.

CHAPTER III.

NEW-CHURCH DOCTRINE.

We now come to the specific theological doctrines of Swedenborg based upon the fundamental principles of his philosophy—notably, upon his doctrine of Degrees, his view of Divine Influx, and his Law of Correspondence.

First, we have his doctrine of God. Much as Swedenborg knew and admired (with great independence of thought) the works of Descartes, he does not seem to have followed him in his metaphysical demonstration of the existence of God. In fact, Swedenborg nowhere delays to prove it by formal argument. He only says: "All the principles of human reason unite and, as it were, concentrate in this, that there is one God, the Creator of the Universe. A man who has reason, therefore, from a common attribute of his understanding, does not and cannot think otherwise." (*D. L. W.* 23.) However, when asking himself why human reason, in a normal state, should be naturally inclined to such a conclusion, he answers in a way which strongly re-

minds one of Descartes' argument in his *Discours de la Méthode*, Part IV. Swedenborg says:

"There are two reasons why this is so. First, because the very faculty of thinking rationally, in itself considered, is not man's but is God's in him. Secondly, because by means of that faculty man either is in the light of heaven or derives thence the common principle of his thought." *

Knowing as we do Swedenborg's conception of the soul, his mode of reasoning does not cause surprise, but it is very interesting to find that Descartes, who looked for truth, not through any spiritual sight but by the way of "universal doubt," should have reached a similar conclusion.

Then Swedenborg defines the nature of God. "There are two things which constitute the essence of God, love and wisdom. The divine love, which in the divine wisdom is life itself—which is God—cannot be conceived of in its essence; for it is infinite and so transcends human apprehension. The divine love and the divine wisdom in themselves are substance and form, for they are very Being and

* Descartes' words are: "L'idée d'un être plus parfait que le mien [ne pouvait me venir du néant]. Car de la tenir du néant c'était chose manifestement impossible; et pour laquelle n'y a pas moins de répugnance que le plus parfait soit une suite et une dependance du moins parfait, qu'il n'y en a que de rien procède quelque chose; je ne la pouvais non plus tenir de moi-même; de façon qu'il restait qu'elle ait été mise en moi par une nature qui fût véritablement plus parfaite que je n'étais, et même qui eut en soi toutes les perfections dont je pouvais avoir quelque idée, c'est à dire, pour m'expliquer en un mot, qui fût Dieu."

Existing." Here Swedenborg makes an important remark: "It is," he says, "because the very Divine Essence is love and wisdom that man has two faculties of life, from one of which he has his understanding and from the other his will. The faculty from which he has his understanding derives all that it has from the influx of wisdom from God; and the faculty from which he has his will derives all that it has from the influx of love from God. That man is not justly wise, and does not exercise his love justly, does not take away the faculties but inwardly closes them." (*D. L. W.* 30.)

The reason of this great fact lies in another fact—very strange and startling at first sight—yet fundamental for Swedenborg, namely, that "God is very Man." Although, in some profound sense, this has a mysterious reference to the Incarnation and its divine effects, yet it is not merely in that sense that Swedenborg makes that wonderful statement: "God is Man." (*D. L. W.* 11.) Nor is it, in his mind, an extreme anthropomorphic idea of Deity. It means for him that in the essential nature of God there is that which accounts for the form of heaven and for the form of man, and for the form of every living thing. It is not God who is thus conceived in the image and likeness of man; it is man who is conceived in the image and likeness of God—a distant and imperfect image, yet an image from which we can rise in some inadequate manner to a conception of the supreme and only perfect Personality which is God. Lotze finely expressed this thought when

he said that the natural sum of all existences tends to prove that perfect Personality is possible only in the infinite Being, and that we see only a pale reflection of it in finite creatures. "In fact," he concludes, "personality is an ideal which, like every other ideal, belongs absolutely to the Infinite Being alone, and is with us, like every other good, merely conditioned and therefore imperfect."

Mr. Ravaisson has also expressed the same idea in even clearer terms, where he said that "the absolute of perfect Personality, namely, the infinite love and wisdom, is the perspective centre whence can be understood the system represented by our own imperfect personality, and represented also in every other form of existence. God helps thus to understand the soul, and the soul to understand nature." This is (unconsciously, no doubt) a distinct Swedenborgian statement of what our author meant by saying "God is Man."

We are thus perhaps less surprised to find that Swedenborg considers the heavens, that is the spiritual world, to be also in the form of man, regenerate man himself being "a heaven in the least form." In his work *Heaven and Hell*, he says: "That heaven in its whole complex resembles a man is an arcanum yet not known in the world. . . . On this indeed many other things depend which without it, as their general principle, would not enter distinctly and clearly into the ideas of the mind. Because they know that all the heavens together with their [angelic] societies resemble a man, [the

angelic spirits] call heaven the greatest and the divine man; divine, from the fact that the Divine of the Lord makes heaven." (No. 59.) Here before Swedenborg's mind arose, no doubt, the wonderful picture of the animal world, a picture which modern Biology has so grandly enlarged and rendered more distinct for us. He saw the human type, as it becomes gradually formed and developed in innumerable organisms, all more or less perfectly, but all distinctly presenting those characters which animal morphology studies, following them through the fascinating maze of homologous adaptations. He thought he saw (and who in contemplating that evolution of the type has not thought with him?)—he thought he saw the Divine Idea at some time gradually revealing itself on the face of living nature, and, step by step, impressing more clearly upon it the sublime seal of its own reality. Surely, he thought, if man is the resulting type of such a process, it is because in the depths of the divine nature itself there exists an essential cause of that type. And between cause and effect there is a necessary relation.

In this way Swedenborg understood the meaning of organic evolution and the form of the spiritual power which determines it, and he worshipped Him in whom all things spiritual and natural live, move, and have their Being. There is certainly something great, even sublime, in such a conception, when, in the light of modern thought, we come to realise its full philosophical and scientific significance.

An unequivocal statement of the absolute unity of

God crowns those lofty views of Swedenborg about the Divine Nature. Yet he is not a Unitarian in the Arian or Socinian sense of the word. His doctrine of the divine unity is not intended to exclude the "Word made flesh," but, on the contrary, distinctly to include it. Moreover, his unity implies, according to his theology, a Trinity, not of "persons" but of "essentials." The Father, the Divine Love, is the *Esse* of the primal substance; the Wisdom or Word by whom are all things, its *Existere;* the Holy Spirit is the proceeding and perpetual operation of the Divine Love and Wisdom in the created world.

Love, Wisdom, and Use exist essentially from Eternity in the one God, but the Trinity becomes actual in Time in the Divine Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him the Father is made manifest, but this does not imply another personality in Jehovah.

The Holy Spirit is the divine truth and power proceeding from the glorified Humanity of the Lord. Hence it follows that the Holy Spirit, like the manifestation in time of the "Word made flesh," is not an eternal procession from the Divine, and Swedenborg thus understands the well-known passage in John vii. 39: "The Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." * This would explain

* In his *True Christian Religion*, Swedenborg remarks that "in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is nowhere mentioned, but the Spirit of holiness, and only in three places (Ps. li. 11; Isa. lxiii. 10 and 11). But in the New Testament, reference to the Holy Spirit appears very frequently."

Swedenborg's view that the Holy Spirit is an essential of the one true God, the Lord Jesus Christ—not a person. In fact, his concept of the Trinity is an essential Trinity of Love, Wisdom, and their operation, leaving absolutely unobscured the idea of the divine Unity. He felt most strongly on this point. He says: "A Trinity of Divine Persons from Eternity or before the world was created, is for our minds a trinity of Gods; and this cannot be done away with by an oral assertion that there is only one God."

For Swedenborg this doctrine is not merely the theological solution of a difficulty which has always been felt, and has become more and more an obstacle to faith. It has consequences of the highest importance, particularly in respect to the dogmas of the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Sacred Passion, the Atonement, Mediation, Propitiation, and Intercession. This will appear from the following passage (*T. C. R.* 135), which shows clearly his mind on the subject:

"God is never angry with any one; He never avenges, tempts, punishes, casts into Hell or condemns. Such things are as far from God, nay, infinitely farther, than hell is from heaven. They are forms of speech, then, used only according to appearances. So also, but in a different sense, are the terms atonement, propitiation, intercession, and mediation; for these are forms of speech expressive of the approach which is opened to God by means of His Humanity. These terms being misunder-

stood, men have divided God into three; and upon that division they have grounded all the doctrine of the Church, and so have falsified the Word." Thus, according to our author, Redemption, in particular, did not consist in a plan whereby Divine Justice was to be satisfied by what has been termed a vicarious sacrifice. Man needs to be reconciled to God; God never has in His love and pity to be reconciled to His erring creatures. He is the Father, tenderly watching for the return of the prodigal son, long before the prodigal thought of arising to go to his Father. We love Him "because He first loved us"; and in Christ He is ever "reconciling the world unto Himself," not Himself to the world. These thoughts seem clear enough to us to-day; we could not imagine God as doing otherwise, given our conception of Him. But these thoughts were by no means generally received in the days when Swedenborg wrote. They represented a very advanced form of theological interpretation, suspected of heresy and considered unscriptural. They enable us to-day to measure the road along which Churches and sects have travelled in the direction of a purer thought of God and greater charity to our neighbour.

No less original is Swedenborg's teaching about the Spiritual World. Speaking as one who has actually seen what he describes, he tells us that the spiritual world is entirely similar to the universe of the natural world, with the only difference that these things are not fixed and stationary as in the natural world,

" because nothing there is natural, but all is spiritual." Thus " countries, with mountains, hills, valleys, plains, fields, lakes, rivers, fountains, appear there as in the natural world ; thus all things of the mineral kingdom are there . . . trees and shrubs of every kind, with fruits and seeds ; plants, flowers, herbs and grasses. Animals, birds, and fishes of every kind appear also." (*D. L. W.* 321, 322.) This similarity between the two worlds is, for our author, as we have already seen, a logical consequence of the principle that a causal correspondence exists between them. The natural world bears the impress of the spiritual world as the warm wax bears the mark of the seal applied to it.

But if there is such striking similarity between the two worlds, there are also striking differences. Angelic inhabitants of the spiritual world, we are told, do not know what time is, because in heaven there are not years and days but changes of state. Whatever is from time in our world is changed with an angel into an idea respecting state. Yet—and this is truly difficult to realise—all things successively advance with angels just as with us ; they have the sense of succession without the notion of time. (*H. H.* 163.)

Again, although all things in heaven appear in place and in space, just as in our world, yet the angels have no notion or idea of place and space. " As this," says Swedenborg, " cannot but seem a paradox, I wish to present the subject in a clear light, for it is of great moment. All progressions in

the spiritual world are made by changes of the states of the interiors (the faculties having relation to the understanding and the will). As progressions are thus made, it is evident that approaches are similitudes as to the state of the interiors, and that withdrawals are dissimilitudes. Hence it is that they are near to each other who are in a similar state, and they are at a distance who are in a dissimilar state. It is from no other cause that the heavens are distinct from each other. . . . It is also from this cause that in the spiritual world one is presented in person to another if only he intensely desires his presence; for thus he sees him in thought and puts himself in his state; and conversely, that one is removed from another in proportion as he is averse to him. . . . When also anyone goes from one place to another, whether in his own city, or in courts or in gardens, or to others out of his own society, he arrives sooner when he desires, and later when he does not desire. The very way, although it is the same, is lengthened or shortened according to the desire. This I have often seen and wondered at." (*H. H.* 191, 195.)

Even if we are disinclined to receive the testimony of the Swedish Seer about such things, we cannot help feeling that in his descriptions of the conditions of existence in the spiritual world, there are profound thoughts resting upon a philosophical Idealism which, perhaps, may throw some light upon many obscure questions not only in heaven, but also in ourselves. Among such questions stand pre-eminently

those having reference to the difficult problems of Time and Space.

But an interesting point is raised by the passages just quoted. Who are those celestial inhabitants of whom Swedenborg has so much to say to us? "It is believed," he says in his book on *Heaven and Hell*, "that the angels were created from the beginning, and that this was the origin of heaven; and that the Devil or Satan was an angel of light, but, because he became rebellious, was cast down with his crew, and that this was the origin of hell. . . . But there is not a single angel in the universal heaven who was created such from the beginning; nor any devil in hell who was created an angel of light and cast down; but all both in heaven and in hell are from the human race." (No. 311.) "It is plain therefore that the natural world, the abode of men on earth, cannot be compared with that world as regards the multitude of the human race. When a man passes from the natural world into the spiritual, it is as from a village into a mighty city." (*L. J.* 27.)

Swedenborg, however, has not found dwellers in heaven and hell alone. Between these he saw an intermediate state which he calls the world of spirits. He distinctly says: "The world of spirits is not heaven, nor is it hell. It is a place or state intermediate between the two, for thither man first goes after death, and then after the required time, according to his life in the world, he is either elevated into heaven or cast into hell. . . . There is a vast number in the world of spirits because the first meeting of all

is there, and all are there examined and prepared." (*H. H.* 421–427.)

"I have conversed with some a few days after their decease, and as they were then recently come, they were in a degree of light there which to them differed little from the light of the world. . . . Some believed that they should first rise again at the time of the last judgment, when the world would perish, and that they should then rise with the body which, though fallen into dust, would then be collected together, and that they were to rise again with flesh and bone. . . . But they were instructed that the last judgment of everyone is when he dies, and that he then appears to himself endowed with a (spiritual) body as in the world, but purer and more exquisite, because things corporeal no longer hinder." (*A. C.* 4527.) It is thus that Swedenborg understands St. Paul when he says that "there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44); while, for him, the world of spirits, or the intermediate state, is that great gulf of which Abraham speaks to the rich man in the parable. (Luke xvi. 26.) That intermediate state is not, however, to be identified with the Purgatory of Roman theology, for it is not a place of torment where sins are punished, but a transitional state in which the real interior disposition of human spirits is revealed, and those whose will is good are prepared for heaven by instruction.

Swedenborg tells us also of the fate of infants after death. (*A. R.* 784.) "It is the belief of some," he

says, "that only infants who are born within the Church go to heaven, and not those who are born out of the Church [and have not received baptism]. Let them know, therefore, that every infant, wherever born, within the Church or without the Church, of pious or of impious parents, is received by the Lord when he dies, and is educated in heaven. . . . Everyone who thinks from reason may know that no one is born for hell, but all for heaven." (*H. H.* 329.)

"Infants do not come into the angelic state immediately after death, but are gradually led into it, by cognitions of good and truth, and this is in accordance with all heavenly order." (*H. H.* 334.)

The reader will be interested to hear of the wonderful experience by which Swedenborg was, as he asserts, enabled to understand the actual processes of death and resuscitation as they take place in the case of all who "cross the bar." We give it in the words of the Seer:

"It has not only been told me how the resuscitation is effected, but has also been shown me by living experience. I was subjected to this very experience, in order that I might fully understand how it is effected.

"I was brought into a state of insensibility as to the bodily senses, thus almost into the state of the dying; the interior life with the faculty of thought, however, remaining entire so that I could perceive or retain in the memory the things which came to pass and which take place with those who are resuscitated from the dead. . . . All affection proper

to myself was taken away, but yet thought and perception remained. I was in this state for some hours. The spirits who were about me then withdrew, supposing that I was dead. An aromatic odour was also perceived, as of an embalmed body; for when celestial angels are present what is cadaverous is perceived as aromatic—which when spirits perceive they cannot approach. Thus, too, evil spirits are kept away from the spirit of man when he is first introduced into eternal life.

"The [two] angels who were sitting at my head were silent, communicating only their thoughts with mine; and when these are received the angels know that the spirit of the man is in the state in which it can be withdrawn from the body. The communication of their thoughts was effected by looking into my face, for thus communications of thoughts are effected in heaven. As thought and perception remained with me, in order that I might know and remember how resuscitation is effected, I perceived that these angels first examined what my thought was—whether it was like that of those who die, which is usually about eternal life, and that they wished to keep my mind in that thought, I was afterwards told that a man's spirit is held in its last thought when the body is expiring, until he returns to the thoughts which come from his general or ruling affection in the world. It was given me especially to perceive and also to feel that there was an attraction, and as it were a pulling of the interiors of my mind, thus of my spirit, out of the body;

and it was said that this is of the Lord, and that thereby the resurrection is effected. . . . These angels appeared, as it were, to roll off the tunic of the left eye towards the septum of the nose, that the eye might be opened and be enabled to see. The spirit perceives no otherwise than that it is effected in this manner, but it is an appearance. When the tunic seems to have been rolled off, a certain brightness is visible, but obscure, as when a man looks through the eyelashes on first awakening. This obscure brightness appeared to me of an azure colour, but I was told afterwards that this takes place with variety. After this something is felt to be gently rolled from off the face, which being done, spiritual thought is induced. This rolling from off the face is also an appearance, for it is represented thereby that from natural thought he comes into spiritual thought. The angels are extremely careful lest any idea should come from the resuscitated that does not savour of love. They then tell him that he is a spirit." *

Having now some idea of the intermediate world, we must further consider Swedenborg's description of Heaven and Hell, the meaning which he attaches to these terms being very different from the sense in which they are commonly used. He tells us, in his usual methodical manner, that Heaven is divided "generally into two kingdoms, specifically into three heavens, and particularly into innumerable societies." The two kingdoms are distinguished by the inner

* For further details on this subject, see *Heaven and Hell*, pp. 445–450.

quality of love of their inhabitants. There are angels who stand foremost in their love of God; there are others in whom predominates the good of charity towards the neighbour. And because the love of the Lord is a more interior good and a more interior love, therefore the former are called celestial angels, and the latter, in whom a less interior love exists, are called spiritual angels. Thus Heaven itself comes to be divided into two kingdoms, a celestial kingdom and a spiritual kingdom.

The essential distinction between the two classes of angels is expressed by Swedenborg in terms which constitute a wonderful angelic psychology, peculiar to the angels it is true, but one by which we are reminded of their human origin. For what makes them celestial or spiritual angels is also what can make us, within certain limits and under certain conditions, celestial or spiritual men. "These [celestial] angels," says Swedenborg, "are such because they have received and do receive Divine Truths immediately into the life, and not, as the spiritual angels, into previous memory and thought. They therefore have those Divine Truths inscribed on their hearts, and perceive them, as it were, in themselves, nor do they ever reason about them, whether it be so or no. . . . Because there is such a distinction between the angels of the celestial kingdom and those of the spiritual kingdom, they are not together, nor have they intercourse with each other. There is only communication by intermediate angelic societies which are called celestial-spiritual; through these the celes-

tial kingdom flows into the spiritual. Hence it is that, although Heaven is divided into two kingdoms, yet it makes one." (*H. H.* 20–27.)

Swedenborg describes three heavens, a Celestial Heaven, a Spiritual Heaven, and a Natural Heaven. This third or lowest heaven, although called natural, has nothing to do with the natural world. Indeed it has the celestial and the spiritual within it. It is therefore called by Swedenborg Spiritual-Natural and Celestial-Natural, and so are also called the angels who fill that heaven. Those are called spiritual-natural who receive influx from the second or spiritual heaven, and those are called celestial-natural who receive influx from the highest or celestial heaven. This explains how, while there are only two kingdoms, there are nevertheless three heavens. Again, there is much delicate psychology in such a conception. It means that the conformity to the Divine Will which constitutes the lowest or natural heaven is modified, in heaven as we find it on earth, by the higher feelings and tendencies of the soul. It is the eternal distinction between Martha and Mary, between the intellectual and practical activities and the contemplative love, the absorbing aspiration towards a divine goal intensely realised.

An interesting point in connection with the heavens is the social condition of their angelic inhabitants. They are not assembled together in one place, compelled to live with uncongenial souls. There, a great progress is realised above earthly conditions. Those angels that are in similar good form one society, and

thus innumerable societies exist whose distance from one another is determined by the difference in the states of their love. They that differ much are widely distant, and they that differ little are but little distant. Similarity brings people together, an ideal condition which indeed recalls earthly tendencies, but without our disappointments and failures!

All who are in similar good, we are told, know each other, although they have never seen each other before. "This," says Swedenborg, "it has sometimes been given me to see, when I have been in the spirit and in company with angels. Some of them have then appeared as if known to me from infancy, and others as if entirely unknown. Those who appeared as if I had known them from infancy were such as were in a state similar to the state of my spirit." (*H. H.* 46.)

One consequence of the life in societies is that, in large societies consisting perhaps of thousands of angels, all are indeed in similar love, but all are not in similar wisdom. Some government is therefore necessary so that principles of heavenly order may be observed.

In the celestial kingdom, government is called "Justice" because what is from the good of love to God is called just. In the spiritual kingdom, government is called "Judgment," because the good of charity towards the neighbour which rules there is the essence of truth. Truth is of judgment, as good is of justice. There are various forms of government in the spiritual kingdom, but all agree in this, that

they regard the public good as the end, and in that the good of every individual. As to rulers, we are told, they are those who excel others in love and wisdom, thus who from love will to do good to all, and from wisdom know how to provide that it shall be done. They do not make themselves greater than others but less; they do not so much rule and command as minister and serve. Generally, all angels delight in service, and their life is a constant joyful, loving activity. "The kingdom of the Lord," concludes Swedenborg, "is a kingdom of uses."

Such descriptions make us think of More's Utopia, and read as subtle criticisms of human society and human governments. Yet, granted that there is a divine kingdom, where God's Will is done, as we pray that it may also be done upon earth, what other forms of associations, what other principles of order, can exist there? And what shall we say of Swedenborg's description of divine worship in heaven? "Divine worship in the heavens as to its externals is not unlike divine worship on earth, but as to internals it is different. . . . Divine worship in the heavens does not consist in frequenting temples and in listening to preaching, but in a life of love, charity, and faith, according to the doctrines. The preachings in the temples serve only as means of instruction in matters relating to life. . . . In the celestial kingdom the sacred edifices are without magnificence; but in the spiritual kingdom they are more or less magnificent." (*H. H.* 227.)

Some of Swedenborg's remarks on the speech of

angels are interesting, and contain much philosophy.

"In the universal heaven they have all one language, and they all understand each other from whatever society they may be, whether near or distant. The language there is not learnt, but is inherent with everyone, for it flows from their very affection and thought. . . . Whoever directs his attention to the subject may know that every thought is from an affection, which is of love; and that the ideas of thought are the various forms into which the general affection is distributed. For there is no thought or idea without an affection. Hence it is that the angels know the character of another from his speech alone, and they know all things of another's life from a few ideas of his thought, because from thence they know his ruling love. . . . The same kind of speech that is in the spiritual world is inherent in every man, but in his interior intellectual part; however, as with man this does not fall into words analogous to affection; as with the angels, man is not aware that he is in it. Yet it is from this that when a man comes into the other life, he speaks the same language as the spirits and angels there, and knows thus how to speak without instruction."

We cannot conclude this rapid examination of Swedenborg's doctrine of Heaven without quoting an important passage from his great work, the *Arcana Cœlestia*, which is of interest if we remember when it was written (1747–1758), inasmuch as it shows a

breadth of thought which is not even now the common religious property of mankind. Our author says:

"It is a common opinion that those who are born out of the Church, who are called Heathen or Gentiles, cannot be saved, for the reason that they have not the Word, without whom there is no salvation. . . . But everyone who thinks from any enlightened reason may see that no man is born for hell, for the Lord is Love itself, and His Love is a desire to save all men. He therefore provides that there may be a religion with all, and through it an acknowledgment of the Divine and an interior life. . . . Thus Gentiles equally with Christians are saved, for heaven is within a man (Luke xvii. 21), and they who have heaven within them come into heaven after death. It is heaven in man to acknowledge the Divine Being and to be led by the Divine. The precepts of every religion have regard to worship, thus to how the Divine Being is to be worshipped so that such a service may be acceptable to Him. And when this is settled in a man's mind—that is to say, in so far as he wills it or in so far as he loves it—he is led by the Lord. It is known that Gentiles live a moral life as well as Christians, and many of them live a better life than Christians. A moral life is lived either from regard to the Divine Being or out of regard to men in the world. A moral life that is lived out of regard to the Divine Being is a spiritual life. Both appear alike in outward form, but in the internal they are entirely different. One saves a man, the other does not save. The man whose moral life is spiritual has

heaven within him, but he whose moral life is only natural [*i.e.* resting on self] has not heaven within him. . . . The case with Christians and Gentiles in the other life, in fact, is this: that Christians who have acknowledged the truths of faith, and at the same time have led a good life, are received before Gentiles—but there are few such at this day—[this was written between 1747 and 1758]; on the other hand, Gentiles who have lived in obedience and in mutual charity are received before Christians who have not led so good a life." (*A. C.* 2590.)

Dante, in placing popes and potentates in his Hell and some Gentiles in his Paradise, and Cato at the gates of his Purgatory, would seem to have felt very much as Swedenborg on this momentous question. But he has not formulated the principle so distinctly and so forcibly.

Swedenborg's teaching about the Church is no less remarkable, and renders still clearer his conception of a practical religion. First, there is, he tells us, the Church Universal: "The Church of the Lord is scattered over the whole terrestrial globe, and thus is universal. All they are in it who have lived in the good of charity according to their religious belief." (*H. H.* 328.) Then he explains, in another place, the meaning of that "exceeding broad" statement. "There are many among them [those ignorant of the Christian Religion], who from rational light have come to know that there is one God; that He created all things and preserves all things; that all good, consequently all truth, is from Him, and that similitude

with Him makes man blessed; and who live, moreover, according to their religious belief, in love to God and in charity towards the neighbour; who from an affection for good do the works of charity and from an affection for truth worship the Supreme. Men of such a character among the Gentiles are in the Lord's spiritual Church. And although ignorant of the Lord while they are in the world, yet they have within them the worship and tacit acknowledgment of Him when they are in good; for in all good the Lord is present." (*A. C.* 3263.)

This large and liberal conception of mankind as the universal Church of Him whose love and "tender mercies are over all His works," is not, however, a surrender or abandonment of Christian Truth on the part of Swedenborg. Within the Universal Church with its many seekers after God "if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us," as Paul told his Athenian hearers, Swedenborg places what he calls the Specific Church, that is, "the Church where the Lord is acknowledged, and where the Word is." Elsewhere he says: "The Church is nowhere else than where the Word is rightly understood, and such as is the understanding of the Word among those who are in the Church, such is the Church." (*S. S.* 79.)

Yet he is careful to guard against the danger of formalism which ever tends to separate theory and practice, faith and life, in religious systems: "They that do not live according to the Word or according to doctrine from the Word so that it is the rule

of life, are not of the Church, but are out of it; and those who live in evil, thus who live contrary to doctrine, are farther out of the Church than the Gentiles who know nothing at all of the Word, of the Lord, and of the Sacraments. For, since they know the goods and truths of the Church, they extinguish the Church within them, which the Gentiles cannot do, because they do not know them." (*A. C.* 6637.) And he concludes: "The Church is one thing and Religion is another. . . . Where there is doctrine and not life, it cannot be said that there is either a Church or Religion; because doctrine looks to life, as one with itself—just as do truth and good, faith and charity, wisdom and love, understanding and will. There is therefore no Church where there is doctrine and not life." (*A. R.* 923.)

Space will not permit us to place with any detail before the reader Swedenborg's most interesting statements about what he deems (not as a private opinion, but as a thing "seen and heard") to have been the succession of Churches upon this earth since specific prehistoric times. He discerns five great religious crises corresponding to as many Churches, each of which is constituted by the way in which the men of those Churches did obey the divine revelation received by them of old "by divers portions and in divers manners." Thus we have the Most Ancient Church, symbolised as Adamic; the Ancient Church said to have been established over Asia and part of Africa, symbolised as Noahtic; the Israelitish Church, embodying the teachings of

Moses and the Prophets, and characterised by a profanation of the Word, which reached its climax in the days when the Lord of the Word ascended the fatal hill of Calvary; fourthly, comes the Christian Church, established by the Lord through the Apostles and Evangelists. Tritheistic conceptions of the Divine, sadly material views of God's kingdom on earth and in heaven, and of the Lord's Second Coming, and later doctrines of salvation by faith alone, together with a general weakening of charity and spiritual ideals, brought about a divine judgment on that dispensation. Then fifthly, in times of momentous political upheaval and social change and scientific and industrial activity, which began with the last years of the eighteenth century, a revolution whose strength is not yet spent, has come a new and last dispensation essentially characterised, according to Swedenborg, by the opening of the spiritual sense of the Word and the consequent manifestation of the true significance of the Eternal Gospel, in Science, in Religion, in Sociology, and in new ideals of the rights and duties of men, of women, and of nations. This is what Swedenborg calls the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, from God out of heaven, signified by the Apostle John in his Revelation. It is not merely the establishment of a New Church conceived as a new ecclesiastical system; it is the inauguration of a new age of the world, the spiritual expression of that age, and the inner power for goodness and truth within it.

It is often said, and rightly said, that Swedenborg

did not found a new Church. He certainly would have repudiated the idea of establishing a "Swedenborgian" Church, if by that name is meant another of those little systems which have their day and cease to be. But it must be acknowledged that Swedenborg, although he contented himself with writing and publishing his doctrines because he believed that he was divinely commanded to do so, constantly refers in his works to a new Church that is to be. This Church, he says, "will first begin among a few, afterwards embrace a larger number, and finally be filled. . . . This Church will be the crown of all the Churches that have hitherto existed upon the earth. . . . At the present day, the interior Word has been opened and divine truths of a still more interior nature have been thence revealed which are to be of service to the *New Church*, which will be called the New Jerusalem." And he saw a reference to that new Church in the words of the Gospel: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 12, 13.)

Thus, some years after his death, early readers of his works who felt unable to remain associated with orthodox forms and doctrines began to organise themselves into societies for worship and study and the diffusion of religious ideas which were then new to the world. In this way began that New Church about which Swedenborg, with such strong assurance, declared that it would first appear "among a few."

It exists comparatively among a few still, although it has commended itself to men of no mean intellectual attainments in Europe and in America. Through the agency of that Church the works of Swedenborg have been translated for the larger part into English, German, French, Swedish, Danish, and Italian, while single treatises already can be obtained in Russian, Spanish, Norwegian, Dutch, Welsh, Icelandic, Japanese, Arabic, Hindi, and also in Esperanto.

Of the future of that Church, it is not proper for us to speak here. Our duty is not to prophesy, but simply to record the fact that Swedenborg's prophetic utterance has so far in a measure been fulfilled, in this sense that his philosophy and his distinctive theology are to-day accepted and religiously valued by associated groups of Christian people in many parts of the world.

To our brief reference to Heaven must be added a few words on Hell also. The fact that Swedenborg speaks of Hell and does not seem to make any reassuring statement as to its duration has created in many minds a strong prejudice against his doctrine. But his teaching on that dread subject is very different from what the word Hell commonly implies. First, he asserts that evil arose from man. God did not create evil and never inspires any evil into His creatures because He is Good itself. It is man who, having been gifted with free will, turns into evil the good which continually flows in from God. The love of self and the love of the world, according to Swedenborg, constitute Hell, and he thus explains how this

takes place: "Man was created to love himself and the world, to love his neighbour and heaven, and also to love the Lord. Hence it is that, after man is born, he first loves himself and the world, and then in proportion as he grows wise he loves his neighbour and heaven, and as he becomes more wise he loves the Lord. When this is the case, then man is in divine order and is led of the Lord actually, and of himself apparently. But in so far as he is not wise, he abides in the first degree, which is to love himself and the world, and if he loves his neighbour, heaven, and the Lord, it is for the sake of himself before the world. And if he is altogether unwise, then he loves himself alone, and the world and his neighbour for the sake of himself. . . . These are the origins of the love of self and the love of the world,* and as these loves are hell, it is evident whence hell is." (*A. E.* 1144.)

"Evil in man is hell in him, for whether we speak of evil or of hell, it is the same. Now, since man is in the cause of his own evil, he therefore, and not the Lord, brings himself into hell. . . . All man's will and love remains with him after death; he who in the world wills and loves an evil, wills and loves the same evil in the other life, and then he no longer suffers himself to be withdrawn from it. Hence it is that a man who is in evil is bound to hell, and, even, as to his spirit, is actually there

* "Infernal fire is the love of self and of the world, and therefore every lust which comes from those loves." (*H. H.* 570.)

[while still living upon earth], and after death he desires nothing more than to be where his evil is." (*H. H.* 547.)

"God never turns away His face from man and rejects him from Himself; He casts no one into hell, and is angry with no one, since God is Good itself, Love itself, and Mercy itself; Good itself cannot do evil to anyone, and love itself and mercy itself cannot reject man from them, because it is contrary to the very essence of mercy and love, thus contrary to the divine itself." (*H. H.* 545.) Such is the general doctrine of Swedenborg about Hell. But the following passage brings us to the principal difficulty in connection with it. He says: "While man lives in the world he is continually kept in such a state that he can be reformed, if only of free choice he desists from evils. . . . But the state of the wicked in the other life is such that as to his interiors he can no longer be amended * but only as to his exteriors, that is to say, by fear of punishment; which when he has frequently suffered he at length abstains—not of free choice but by compulsion, his lust to do evil remaining, which lust is held in check, as was said, by fears which compel and are the means of an external amendment." (*A. C.* 6977.) †

* "The reason why after death a man can no longer be reformed by instruction in the world is, because the ultimate plane which consists of natural cognitions and affections is there quiescent, and as it is not spiritual, cannot be opened. . . . On this account a man remains to eternity such as the life of his love had been in the world." (*H. H.* 480.)

† "Infernal torments are not, as some suppose, the stings

This seems to imply the doctrine of everlasting punishment, but here the cause of that everlasting fate is reversed. It is not God who decrees that it shall be everlasting, but the creature who, clinging with loving delight to the evil which is "hell in him," prefers to have it so. It is not God who "casts into hell," that is, who inspires that evil love; it is the evil man himself who "desires nothing more than to be where his evil is." We see enough of such evil propensities here on earth, enough of those strange and inexplicable aversions to all order, goodness and truth, often beyond the reach of moral assistance and example and only moderated in their outbursts by fear, to be able at least to conceive similar states beyond the grave; such states may well be described as hell, whether here or there.

The difficulty has always been to reconcile such states considered as unchangeable and for ever unalterable with the goodness and wisdom of God. It looks like a permanent defeat of that goodness and wisdom. On the other hand, can we speak of duration in a sphere of existence where time and space cease to be what they are at present to us? Apart from real time, how can we ask the meaning of an unending hell? I do not say "of an unending punishment,"

of conscience; for they who are in hell have no conscience, and therefore cannot be so tormented." (*A. C.* 965.)

"The torment does not arise from grief on account of the evil they have done, but from the fact that they cannot do evil, for this is the delight of their life." (*A. C.* 8232.)

"To be withheld [from their evil loves] is to be tormented. Such a restraint is the common torment of hell, out of which innumerable others arise." (*A. E.* 890.)

because, in the doctrine of Swedenborg, punishment is an occasional form of restraint, and not an essential part of his conception of hell. He says in fact (*A. C.* 8232): "They who had punished and tormented others [other evil spirits in hell] are in turn punished and tormented by others, and this *until at length such ardour abates, from fear of punishment.*" When such ardour abates, evidently punishment ceases also, and here we have at any rate some escape from the awful thought of everlasting punishment. No one before Swedenborg had said anything so definite on that subject. Still there remains that unchangeable state of the will after death; God made that will free.

The difficulty is caused by our inability to see how God could turn that will to Himself by affecting its freedom, without altering the very nature of the human spirit. Swedenborg apparently was not shown that, and he could therefore only say what he has said. Mr. Howard Spalding has a very striking passage bearing upon this question in his *Spiritual World*, p. 95. He says: "It is possible to conceive of a very high order of external civilisation, exhibiting the most polished forms of human intercourse, and apparently a high regard for the public good, which would, nevertheless, have self for its central motive and therefore be essentially infernal in its nature. Such developments may be possible in Hell. If they are possible, and if they would be beneficial, they will come; for the Lord is inexhaustible, unchanging Mercy."

We must now leave those regions of the other

world, and return to this earthly sphere to consider what Swedenborg has to say of man, of his soul, and of the relations between the soul and the body.

His conception of the soul differs on many points from the views generally held by his contemporaries. The soul for him is a unity, but one which does not exclude multiplicity, not only of faculties but also of degrees establishing a sort of hierarchy among those faculties. The soul is a substance, for it has existence, and it is also a form, by which Swedenborg does not mean a shape. In philosophic language, essence would be the correlative to form, essence being that which makes anything to be what it is, and form being that in which and by which the thing has existence. The soul of man, then, is a spiritual substance and form, but a form admitting in the depths of substance of various degrees, one being more interior than another, but each existing, subsisting from another. Such are, for instance, the human will, the understanding, the memory, or the faculty of speech, all those degrees or forms having a distinct perfection according to their capacity of receiving life, whether proximately or remotely, from the one source of life, the Life of God. That is Swedenborg's fundamental philosophical conclusion. From this he goes on to say that man is so made as to be at the same time in the spiritual and in the natural world. Therefore his spirit is interiorly related to the spiritual world, and outwardly, through the body, to the natural world, the body itself being merely a superadded form destined to be altogether and permanently rejected

at the time of death. Thus our author distinguishes in man's spirit what he calls an Internal and External. These terms, translated from the Latin, are no doubt somewhat strange to modern ears, but they have in Swedenborg's works a very definite meaning. Thus he will say that the man whose internal, together with his external, is in the light of the world, does not think spiritually but materially: he is a natural man. What does he exactly mean here? By "the light of the world" Swedenborg means, for instance, the sight of the eye; generally the relations which the senses establish in us with the natural world, all ideas of time and all ideas of space, without which the natural man cannot think.

On the contrary, by "the light of heaven" he would mean a higher form of mental relation. Those are in that light, he says (*A. C.* 1458), "who are in a degree of wisdom and intelligence according to their state, and those are in the highest light who are in a state of the highest wisdom and intelligence." And he adds in another place (*A. C.* 3109): "When truth is being elevated from the natural into the rational (or, as Plato would have said, from appearance into reality), it is taken out of the sphere of worldly light into the sphere of heavenly light, thus, as it were, from the obscurity of night into the clearness of day." Such passages show how much we may lose when we allow ourselves to be discouraged by the peculiar language of Swedenborg. Before we can judge him, we must make sure that we understand his vocabulary. Thus, he goes on to say that in the

internal there are thousands of things which in the external appear as one general thing, so that thought and perception are clearer in proportion as they are more interior. This is a profound truth, the same truth which Wordsworth expressed when he wrote that

> " . . . The meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

According to Swedenborg, the human spirit presents three discrete degrees, the natural, the spiritual, and the celestial. How and in what order do these degrees work? When a man is born, we are told, he comes first into the natural degree, and this increases within him on that continuous plane according to his knowledge and the understanding acquired thereby, to the highest point of understanding, which Swedenborg calls the Rational.

But yet the second or spiritual degree is not thereby opened. This is opened by the love of Uses, another characteristic expression constantly found in his writings. He defines it thus: " That which conduces to use is to know what is good and true, and that which is of use is to will and do it. . . . To do truths is to perform uses." (*A. C.* 5293; *D. L. W.* 251.) His doctrine of Uses has a universal application from God to man and from man to God. But we may not dwell here on that vast question. We say, then, that the second or spiritual degree is opened by the love of uses, a spiritual love manifested in a love towards our neighbour.

But the third or celestial degree still remains closed. It is only opened by a celestial love of use, which is love to God Himself. Now, what is that love, and how is it known ? That love is expressed in a life showing forth in a living way the divine precept : To shun evil and to do good from the highest motive, *i.e.* because we love so to live and know that love to be divine. Thus, in the successive opening of those three degrees we are initiated into the mystery of the soul's ascent from darkness to light, from the lower regions of the earthly to the resplendent summits of goodness and truth realised in love. A man, says Swedenborg, knows nothing of the opening of those degrees within him so long as he lives in the world. But when a man puts off the natural degree (which he does when he dies), he comes into the degree that was opened within him in the world.

There is one question of special interest of which a few words must be said, namely, the relations between the intellect and the will in the human mind.

The love and wisdom which proceed from God as Life into the soul of man, according to Swedenborg, proceed from God as one, but they are not received into the soul as one. They are only received separately and gradually into the human understanding and will. And this is a matter of the highest moment; for if the understanding could not be separately perfected, and the will by means of it, a man would be practically in the position of an animal. Man's understanding, being under the domination of his will, would be at the mercy of his desires ; he

would not be able to act from reason but only from a form of instinct, and consequently the will of man, not being in any way modified, curbed by an understanding illuminated by its own cognitions of truth, the most disastrous consequences must inevitably follow, since instinct in man is no longer, as in animals, a safe and constant guide.

Yet, "it is according to divine order that good which is of the will, and truth which is of the understanding, should be conjoined in the soul and not separated, that they should be one and not two." We cannot conceive of any real perfection in a man whose understanding says one thing and whose will tends to another thing. In the perfected man, the will and the understanding make truly one mind. But this union, this "marriage in the soul," is a consummation. It is not so from the beginning. Nevertheless it must never be forgotten that the will, rather than the understanding, constitutes the man, and this is the reason why it is so essential that the understanding should be capable of an independent perfection of its own. Love, says Swedenborg, is what distinguishes, for every man is his own love.

Wisdom is but the form of love. What tends to deceive us in this is that the understanding can be elevated above the quality of the will, and appear outwardly as the supreme faculty in man. Unfortunately, experience teaches us how little even the highest genius in a man will show us what that man's moral nature really is. The attitude of the will, the upward or downward glance of his spirit, if we may

so speak, can alone show us that. In his *Crown of Wild Olive*, Ruskin has a passage which is a luminous commentary upon this truth. He says: "It is not an indifferent nor optional thing whether we love this or that . . . what we *like* determines what we *are*, and is the sign of what we are."

This is exactly Swedenborg's view. This also is in exact harmony with his doctrine of Charity with which we may fitly conclude our brief study of Swedenborg's teaching. Charity, he tells us, does not merely consist in a benevolent attitude towards the poor and needy. It essentially consists in doing what is right in every work, and our duty in every office; for "charity is an internal affection from which man wills to do good, and this without remuneration. The delight of a man's life consists in doing it. Indeed, with those who do good from an internal affection, there is charity in everything that they think and say, and that they will and do." But, he adds: "Those who have the love of self and of the world for an end can in no wise be in charity. They do not even know what charity is, and cannot comprehend that to will and do good to the neighbour without reward, as an end, is heaven in man."

Swedenborg constantly returns to that idea of the essential disinterestedness of true charity, as in the following passage in his *Arcana Cœlestia* (No. 6392): "Many reject good works, believing that they cannot be done by any one without a view to merit by them. For they do not know that those who are led of the Lord desire nothing more than to

do good works, and that they think of nothing less than of merit by them. *For this is of the new will which is given by the Lord to those who are regenerated.* That will is indeed the Lord's in man."

Then we have his criterion of character by which he urges every man to examine his own life. It seems very simple, both in thought and language, but it is the perfect expression of his great principle, which is as the Creed of the faith that was in him, namely, that "All religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good."

He puts the question: How may a man know which he is among, whether among the infernal spirits or the angelic? And his answer is this: "If he intends evil to his neighbour, thinks nothing but evil of him, and actually does evil when he can, and finds delight in it, he is among the infernals and even becomes an infernal in the other life; but if he intends good to his neighbour and thinks nothing but good of him, and actually does good when he can, he is among the angelic, and becomes an angel too in the other life. This is the criterion. Let everyone examine himself by it." (*A. C.* 1680.) And thus he concludes: "Love, life, works, with every man, make one, so that whether you say love or life or works, it is the same. As has been already shown, love constitutes the life of man, and his life is such as his love. . . . If the works are evil, it follows that there is no faith of truth in him but a faith of falsity; for evil and falsity cohere, but not evil and truth. But if the works are good, it follows

that there is a faith of truth, for good and truth mutually love each other and conjoin. But if a man's works in the external form appear good, and yet he is interiorly evil, it follows that his is a faith of falsity, however with his mouth he may speak truth—but truth that is contaminated with evil from his interior." (*A. E.* 842.)

All this is summed up in these words taken from Swedenborg's *Spiritual Diary*, in which he noted his most intimate thoughts and reflections: "Love is the fundamental principle from which and by which heaven exists."

CHAPTER IV.

CONCLUSION.

This brief summary of the life and teaching of Emanuel Swedenborg, which we have, as much as possible, given in his own words, will perhaps suffice to supply the reader with a general idea of the man and of his thoughts. It is almost impossible to express in a few pages the full contents of his numerous works, but we have perhaps said enough to show that Swedenborg, as an original thinker and as a religious reformer, deserves a place among the men who have honestly laboured for the advancement of human civilisation and the progress of human ideals. As a man of science, his claims are to-day generally recognised; as a philosopher, it is more and more seen that his views, far from being obsolete, either in their fundamental principles or in their tendencies, are, on the contrary, strangely modern in many respects, and if, in his own day, his views did not attract the attention which is accorded to them at the present time, the reason evidently is that they were addressed to a world which was not yet pre-

pared to listen to them. As a theologian, he was still more in advance of his age; many of his doctrines which to-day seem to us almost truisms, and are received in one form or another as inevitable conclusions, were absolutely new, and consequently regarded with suspicion, when not openly condemned, by the Churches in the eighteenth century, and even much later.

It must, however, be admitted that the slowness with which Swedenborg's writings have won their way among educated readers is partly due to the peculiar style of their author. His indifference to mere literary form, his frequent repetitions of the same ideas, his often tiresome Latin periods, which even the best translators find much difficulty in rendering less tiresome in English, and less obscure in their meaning,—all this tends to discourage the general reader when for the first time he tries to study Swedenborg not only in books written about him, but in those written by himself. Yet, Swedenborg is not so difficult to read after all. Once we have mastered his peculiar vocabulary and have become accustomed to his language, we find no real impediment to the intelligence of his works. Many who, on first reading, had thrown down the book and resolved to read no more, have, after making a fresh courageous attempt, been surprised to find how much clearer and easier the work became as they went on. Nevertheless, it is wise to acquire in the first instance a general knowledge of Swedenborg's doctrines in some of the numerous works published

about them.* Thus the key is obtained for a better understanding of the doctrines, and the difficulty of reading the original texts is thereby greatly diminished.

Moreover, too much will not be made of that difficulty in the case of Swedenborg, if it is remembered how often the same difficulty is experienced in studying the works of other famous philosophers. Descartes, in spite of his beautiful French style, is not always easy to follow; Kant is anything but clear in many places; and we are grateful for any help we can obtain in reading Fichte, Schelling, or Hegel. Generally speaking, it is the subject which is the true cause of our trouble rather than the author himself; and as regards Swedenborg, we may well forgive him for the trouble he gives us in consideration of the broader outlook on life, on human thought, and on religion which we can derive from a study of his writings. Such men as S. T. Coleridge the poet, Thomas Carlyle, Coventry Patmore, Robert Browning, Emerson, and many others, have felt this, and, while reserving the independence of their judgment, have freely expressed their admiration for the man and the philosopher.

Many thoughtful minds, in spite of any objections which they may entertain to some of the theological implications of Swedenborg's philosophy, are disposed to recognise the position which that philosophy occu-

* Most of those works are published by the Swedenborg Society, and may be obtained at the Society's Bookshop, 1 Bloomsbury Street, W.

pies to-day as a factor in the intellectual movement which seems to be leading modern science in the direction of more spiritual ideals. If so, there is ample justification for the view of many distinguished students of Swedenborg, that the time has come to pay more serious attention to his philosophy. Indeed, the times in which we live seem to support that conclusion. Underlying the social unrest so characteristic of this age, there is a deeply felt need of certain foundation-truths which men at present vainly look for where their forefathers had found satisfaction and peace. Too vague appear to be the answers to our anxious questionings. Yesterday, it was some kind of materialistic Monism; to-day, it is Pragmatism; to-morrow, we are told, it is to be Bergsonism. Is it not therefore natural that we should desire to become more fully acquainted with a philosophy which has also much to say on the unity of substance, like Monism; on the practical applications of First Principles to human life, like Pragmatism; and on mind in its relation to cerebral activity, like Bergsonism?

Perhaps we shall be reminded that, as it has often been said that Plato's philosophy was not so much a philosophical system as the intrusion of a religious conviction, the same may also be said of Swedenborg. No doubt, in this would lie, for certain minds, the chief imperfection of those two great thinkers. But, as regards Emanuel Swedenborg, while it must certainly be admitted that his inmost thoughts were instinct with religious conviction, that conviction in

him was as clear and definite as it was in Plato vague and undefined. Hence, Swedenborg's philosophy, whatever may be thought of it as a solution of the problems of life, can, at any rate, in no way be considered as a disguised intruder: it was openly meant to be as the Beautiful Gate of a glorious temple "not made with hands."

From the day when Swedenborg believed himself to have been called from a philosophy of thought to a philosophy of life, every page he wrote bore the mark of that lofty ideal; his religious aim was to substitute to a mere worship of the lips a true worship of Use through a living sympathy with the needs of the human soul and a practical application of rational and spiritual truths to the conditions of human life; every effort of his untiring energy was directed to the realisation of a regenerated social state in Humanity by the power of spiritual ends made clearer by the removal of false ideas, superstitious traditions, and selfish habits. Does not, perhaps, in this lie the secret of his quiet but continuous influence—the persistence of which mere intellectual eminence can hardly suffice to explain?

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